

NO SALVATION OUTSIDE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

An Inquiry, Whether Salvation Can Be Had Without True Faith, and out of the Communion of the Church of Christ

by Bishop George Hay of Scotland [1729-1811],

Excerpts From **THE SINCERE CHRISTIAN**

Bishop George Hay was one of the greatest Catholic teachers and apologists of the early 19th Century. His three famous books are *The Sincere Christian*, *The Devout Christian*, and *The Pious Christian* which are out of print. Bishop Hay was a formidable opponent of liberalism, and his works have received high praise from numerous Catholic bishops of the 19th Century. Paul Cardinal Cullen said, "the learned Bishop's writings display a great power of reasoning, and great critical acumen, while they supply an inexhaustible mine of erudition and Scriptural knowledge".

This eleven-part presentation is taken from the concluding chapters *The Sincere Christian*. It is here that Dr. Hay demonstrates from Scripture that the Catholic Church is the one true Church, outside of which there is no salvation. The bishop's presentation is scrupulously methodical. He

thoroughly explains one point, then employs it as a foundation for the next. This exhaustive treatise is desperately needed, especially in our age when the doctrinal truth on the one true Church of Christ is denied by a great multitude of Catholic laity, clergy and prelates.

PART 1

Introduction and State of the Question

There is nothing in which the great Apostle of the Gentiles seems more to glory than in his ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, and in the sincerity of his heart in delivering to the world the sacred truths of eternity pure and uncorrupted. He was not ashamed of these Divine truths; he rejoiced when he was called to suffer for them; he had no worldly interest in view in preaching them; he sought not the esteem and favor of men in delivering them; his only view was to promote the honor of his blessed Master, and to gain souls to Him, and therefore he had no idea of using flattering words, or of accommodating the doctrine of the Gospel to the humors of men.

He knew that the truths revealed by Jesus Christ are unalterable; that "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His words shall never pass away;" and that, therefore, to corrupt these sacred words, though but in one single article, would

be ". . . perverting the Gospel of Christ," [Gal. 1: 7], — a sin so grievous that the Holy Ghost, by His mouth, pronounces a curse upon anyone, though an angel from Heaven who shall dare to be guilty of it.

Hence he describes his own conduct in preaching the Gospel as follows: ". . . You know from the first day that I came into Asia, in what manner I have been with you for all the time. . . . How I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have preached it to you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house," [Acts 20: 18-20]" . . . we had confidence in our God, to speak unto you the Gospel of God in much carefulness. . . . not as pleasing men, but God, Who proveth our hearts. For neither have we used at any time the speech of flattery, as you know, nor taken occasion of covetousness; [God is witness]. Nor sought we glory of men, neither of you, nor of others." [1 Thess. 2: 2,4-6] "For we are not as many, adulterating the Word of God; but with sincerity, but as from God, before God, in Christ we speak," [2 Cor. 2: 17]. "But we renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor adulterating the Word of God, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience, in the sight of God. . . . For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord . . ." [2 Cor. 4: 2,5]. ". . . so I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men, I should not be a servant of Christ." [Gal. 1: 10] Now, ". . . Christ sent me to preach the Gospel, not in wisdom of speech lest the Cross of Christ should be made void; for the

word of the Cross to them indeed that perish is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God. . . . it pleased God by the foolishness of our preaching to save them that believe. . . . For the foolishness of God is wiser than men . . . the foolish things of the world God hath chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong, . . . That no flesh should glory in His sight." [1 Cor. 1: 17-18, 21, 25, 27, 29] "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth . . ." [Rom. 1: 16]. And therefore, " . . . I brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of Christ. . . . and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the Spirit and power. That your Faith might not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God." [1 Cor. 2: 1, 4, 5]

The Church of Christ, animated by the same Divine Spirit of truth which inspired this holy Apostle, has at all times regulated her conduct according to the model set before her in his words and example," . . . contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints." [Jude, 1: 3]; her continual care is ". . . to keep that which is committed to thy trust" pure and undefiled, "avoiding all profane novelties of words . . ." [1 Tim. 6: 20]; that the sacred words of God, "

. . . I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth . . . from henceforth and for ever." [Isa. 59: 21] She therefore knows not what it is to temporize in religion, in order to please men, not to adulterate the Gospel of Christ to humor them; she declares the sacred truths revealed by Jesus Christ in their original simplicity, without seeking to adorn them with the persuasive words of human wisdom, much less to disguise them in a garb not their own.

Truth, plain and unadorned, is the only weapon she employs against her adversaries, regardless of their censure or their approbation. "This is the truth," she says, "revealed by God; this ye must embrace, or ye can have no part with Him." If the world look upon what she says as foolishness, she is not surprised, for she knows that ". . . the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God. For it is foolishness to him, and He cannot understand . . ." [1 Cor. 2: 14]; but that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men;" and pitying this blindness, she earnestly prays God to enlighten them, "With modesty admonishing them, . . . if, peradventure, God may give them repentance to know the truth." [2 Tim. 2: 25].

If ever there was a time when this conduct of the Church was necessary, the present age seems particularly to demand it. At present the gates of Hell seem opened, and infidelity of every kind stalks lawless on the earth; the sacred truths of religion are reviled and denied, the Gospel adulterated by

countless contradictory interpretations; its original simplicity disfigured by loftiness of speech and the persuasive words of human wisdom. A thousand condescensions and compliances are permitted in the unchangeable doctrines of Faith and the pure maxims of morality and "the narrow way that leads to life" converted into "the broad road that leads to destruction."

deist, atheist of "good moral life"

This observation applies particularly to that latitudinarian opinion so common nowadays, *that a man may be saved in any religion, provided he lives a good moral life according to the light he has*; for by this the Faith of Christ is made void, and the Gospel rendered of no avail. A Jew, a Mahometan, a heathen, a deist, an atheist, are all comprehended in this scheme, and if they live a good moral life, have an equal right to salvation with a Christian! To be a member of the Church of Christ is no longer necessary; for whether we belong to her or not, if we live a good moral life, we are in the way of salvation!

What a wide field does this open to human passions! What license does it give to the caprice of the human mind! It is therefore of the utmost consequence to examine the ground of this opinion, to see if we can safely trust our salvation to it. It is doubtless the interest of atheists and deists to adopt this opinion, to extol it with the highest praises for liberality of sentiment and charity; but a Christian who believes the

Gospel will not receive it so readily: he knows that the Scriptures contain the truth of God, and; that it is unsafe to trust our soul to any maxim, however specious, which is not, grounded on their sacred oracles; and therefore, before he adopts it, he will rigorously scrutinize it by comparing it with what they teach.

free-thinking diametrically opposed to revelation

To do this is the design of the following inquiry, or rather to show, from the precise declaration of the Word of God, that the above free-thinking maxim is diametrically opposed to the light of revelation; for there we learn that the Son of God became man and appeared among men, in order to instruct them in the knowledge of those Divine truths on which their salvation depends; and therefore that He absolutely requires true Faith in Him, and, in the sacred truths which He revealed, as a necessary condition of salvation. There also we learn that He instituted a holy Church on earth, to be the depository of these truths, and that He absolutely requires all to be united with that Church in order to be saved.

In the belief of these two truths "Christian" Churches in general agree. The Churches of *England* and *Scotland*, no less than the, Catholic Church, solemnly acknowledge them, and hold that, without the true Faith of Jesus Christ, and without being a member of His true Church, there is no salvation. They all agree in the belief of these truths, however much they differ in their application. In this inquiry,

then, it is the common cause of Christianity which is defended. To which Church the author belongs will easily appear; and if he applies these general truths to his own Church, it is because he believes it to be the true Church. A member of any other must do the same if he reason consequentially; wherefore, without any further preamble, we shall proceed to the point, and show, in the words of the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, *that out of the Church of Christ there is no ordinary possibility of salvation* [Confession of Faith, chap. xxv]

[As this inquiry proceeds, Bishop Hay demonstrates that the Roman Catholic Church is the one True Church of Christ, outside of which there is no salvation. In mentioning the Churches of England and Scotland Bishop Hay is merely demonstrating that the belief founded on Sacred Scripture, that there is only one true Church, is common among the Churches of England, Scotland and Rome.]

Q. 1. How does this appear from the Holy Scriptures?

A. The Holy Scriptures are very plain on this head; but as the various texts propose it under different points of view, we shall, for greater clearness, consider them separately.

SECTION I: Direct Proofs from Scripture

1. The prophet Isaiah, foretelling the glory of the Church of Christ, says, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall

prosper, and every tongue that resisteth thee in judgment thou shalt condemn," [Isa. 54: 17]. "For the nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish," [Isa. 60: 12]. Here we see declared in express terms that all those who oppose the Church of Christ, and refuse to submit to her authority, shall be condemned by her, and shall perish. Our Savior declares the same in still stronger terms, when He says to the pastors of His Church, in the persons of His Apostles, when He sent them to preach the Gospel, "And whosoever shall not receive you, NOR HEAR YOUR WORDS, going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Amen, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city," [Matt. 10: 14, 15].

2. Our Savior, after instructing us to admonish our offending brother in private, or before a few witnesses, concludes thus: "And if he will not hear them, tell the Church. And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." [Matt. 18: 17]. The heathens are those who know not the true God, and who worship idols, and the very devils themselves, instead of God. The publicans were a class of people among the Jews odious for their crimes, and looked upon by all as abandoned by God, and given over to a reprobate sense. With these, then, all who obstinately resist the voice of the Church are classed and condemned by the mouth of Jesus Christ Himself.

3. Our Savior, speaking of His Church under the figure of a flock, of which He Himself is the good shepherd, says: "And other sheep I have that are not of this fold; them also I must bring. And they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." [John 10: 16]. He is here speaking of those who were not then joined in communion with His Apostles and other disciples, and He calls them at that time "His sheep;" but to show there was no salvation for them in the state in which they then were, and unless they were united to the fold, He says, "them also I must bring, which shows that, according to the disposition of the Divine decrees, it was absolutely necessary that all who belong to Jesus Christ, all whom He acknowledges for His sheep, should be brought to, and united in communion with, that one fold, which is His Church.

4. In consequence of this, we are assured that, when the Apostles began to publish the Gospel, "The Lord increased daily together such as should be saved." Or, as the Protestant translation has it, "The Lord daily added to the Church such as should be saved," [Acts 2: 47]; which points out in the strongest manner, by what God actually did, that the being added to the Church is a condition absolutely required by Him in order to be saved; and if that were so then, it must be so now, and to the end of the world; for the conditions of salvation, ordained at the beginning and revealed by Jesus Christ, cannot be altered by any other;

and He has never made any new revelation to alter them Himself.

5. The Church is the Body of Christ, and all who belong to the Church are members of His body, and united with Jesus Christ the head; but those who are out of the Church are not members of His body, nor are they united with Christ the head. Now, speaking of His Church and her members under the figure of a vine, with its branches, He says, "I am the vine, you the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without Me, ye can do nothing. If anyone abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth." [John 15: 5, 6]. What Christ here says under the figure of a vine is equally true as to the members and the body; for no member separated from the body can do anything; it has neither life nor feeling, but falls into corruption: which expressly shows that if we be not united to the Church of Christ, whether we consider this Church as a body consisting of the head and members, or as a vine with its branches, we are not united with Christ, but on the way to perdition.

SECTION II: Proofs from the Necessity of True Faith

1. Jesus Christ, addressing Himself to His eternal Father, says, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." [John

17: 3] Hence it necessarily follows that all those who do not know Jesus Christ cannot have eternal life. Now, this knowledge of Jesus Christ is not the mere knowledge that such a person existed, but believing Him to be what He is, the eternal Son of God, made man for the salvation of mankind; and therefore He says again, "For God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." [John 3: 16]

Hence the believing in Jesus Christ is one condition positively required by God in order for salvation; so that without this belief there can be no salvation; for, as He Himself again declares, ". . . he that doth not believe is already judged; because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God." [John 3: 18] and ". . . he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." [John 3: 36]. And the beloved disciple adds, "For many seducers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; this is a seducer and an anti-Christ." [2 John 1: 7] By which it is manifest that those who do not know Jesus Christ, and consequently do not believe in Him, and also those who do know that there was such a Person, but refuse to believe, and confess that He is the Son of God *come in the flesh*, cannot be saved; and therefore, that the knowing and believing in Jesus Christ is appointed by Almighty God, as an absolute condition of salvation.

2. But it is not enough to believe in the Person of Jesus Christ; it is also required to believe His doctrine, His words, those Divine truths which He has revealed; and, indeed, how can we believe Him to be God if we refuse to believe what He says? Hence, when He gave the pastors of His Church, in the persons of His Apostles, their commission to preach the Gospel, He ordered them to teach the world "to observe all those things whatsoever I have commanded you," [Matt. 28: 20]. And He immediately adds, "He that believeth and is Baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." [Mark 16: 16] — where it is manifest that the belief of His doctrine, the observance, and consequently the belief, of all those things which He commanded His Apostles to teach, is a necessary condition of salvation. Nay, He adds in another part, "For he that, shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him, when He shall come in the glory of His Father, with His holy Angels." [Mark 8: 38] Now, if being ashamed of His words brings such a condemnation, what will the denying of them do? It is evident, therefore, that the true Faith of Jesus Christ comprehends the belief both of His Person and His words — that is, of His doctrine; and that this Faith is laid down by Almighty God as a necessary condition of salvation.

3. As it is impossible that Jesus Christ could reveal contradictions, or say to one that anything is true, and to another that it is false, the true Faith of Jesus Christ cannot

contain contradictions; it must be the same everywhere, and in no point contrary to itself. This the Scripture expressly affirms, "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." [Eph. 4: 5] Now, St. Paul positively declares that ". . . without Faith it is impossible to please God. . . ." [Heb. 11: 6]; consequently this one true Faith of Jesus Christ is so absolutely required as a condition of salvation, that without it, let a man do what he will, it is impossible to please God, or be saved.

4. The Scripture declares that, when the Apostles published the truths of the Gospel, ". . . as many as were ordained to everlasting life believed." [Acts 13: 48]; consequently, those who did not believe were not ordained to eternal life; whence it evidently follows that Faith is a condition absolutely required by God for obtaining eternal life. For St. Paul affirms, "But the sure foundation of God standeth firm, having this seal: The Lord knoweth who are His; . . ." [2 Tim. 2: 19]; that is to say, God, from all eternity, most certainly knows who are His — who those are, who, by obeying His holy grace, will continue Faithful to the end, and be happy with Him forever; and all such He ordains to eternal life. When, therefore, the Scripture affirms that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," it evidently shows that the belief of the truths of the Gospel, or true Faith, is appointed by God as a necessary condition of salvation, as none are so ordained but those who believe.

5. Our Blessed Savior, speaking of those who belong to Him, says, ". . . I know mine, and mine know Me. . . . My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall not perish for ever. " [John 10: 14, 27, 28] Can any words express more clearly that to know Jesus Christ, and to hear His voice, and follow Him — that is, to believe and obey Him — are the distinguishing marks of His sheep, to whom He gives eternal life? Consequently, those who do not believe Him are none of His, and therefore will not be saved; as He expressly says to the Jews, "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep." [John 10: 26]; ". . . For if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sin." [John 8: 24]; which shows too, a demonstration that Faith in Jesus Christ is expressly appointed by Almighty God as a condition of salvation; "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." [Acts 4: 12]

6. St. Paul, expressing that of the Psalmist, "Today if ye shall hear His voice," etc., says, "And to whom did He swear that they should not enter into His rest: but to them that were incredulous? And we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." [Heb. 3: 18, 19] On this account he exhorts thus "Take heed, brethren, lest perhaps there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God." [Heb. 3: 12]; and again, "There remaineth a day of rest for the people of God. . . . Let us hasten, therefore, to enter

into that rest; lest any man fall into the same example of unbelief." [Heb. 4: 9, 11]. In all this passage, the main scope of the Apostle is to show that unbelievers cannot go to Heaven; and this truth is confirmed by Almighty God even with a solemn oath.

7. The Holy Scriptures declare that unbelievers, instead of going to Heaven, shall be condemned to Hell-fire; and class all such with the worst of criminals. Thus the Almighty Himself declares to St. John the Apostle, "but the fearful and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." [Apoc. 21: 8]. If, therefore, Almighty God has sworn that unbelievers shall not enter into His rest, and if He declares that their portion shall be in Hell, one must shut his eyes not to see that true belief, true Faith in Jesus Christ and His words — namely, that Faith, without which it is impossible to please God — is absolutely required by Almighty God as a condition of salvation.

8. The Word of God assures us that, antecedently to Faith in Christ, all mankind are under sin, and that it is impossible to be justified from sin but by Faith in Jesus Christ, which is set forth by God as the means of obtaining justification. Thus, ". . . we have charged both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin. As it is written: There is not any man just." [Rom. 3: 9,10] "Even the justice of God, by Faith of Jesus Christ,

unto all, and upon all them that believe in Him: for there is no distinction. For all have sinned and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption, that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation through Faith in His Blood, . . ." [Rom. 3: 22-25]. Also, ". . . the scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise, by the Faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." [Gal. 3: 22]

9. These sacred testimonies of the Word of God are so clear and convincing, that the Church of England admits and embraces the Athanasian Creed as containing nothing but Divine truths, and what may be *proved by the most evident tests of Scripture*, as is declared in the eighth of the thirty-nine Articles. Now, the Athanasian Creed begins thus "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith, which Faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlasting." Then, after explaining the great mysteries of the Catholic Faith concerning the unity and trinity of God, and the Incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, it concludes in these words: "This is the Catholic Faith, which, except a man believe Faithfully, he cannot be saved." This speaks plainly indeed, and needs no application.

Now, seeing that the true Faith, or the firm belief of those truths which Jesus Christ revealed, is thus absolutely required as a condition of salvation, it follows as a natural

consequence that out of the true Church of Christ there is no salvation, because this true Faith can be found only in the true Church of Christ; to her the sacred charge of the truths of eternity was committed; the words of Jesus Christ were first put into her mouth, and an express covenant made by God, *That they should never depart from her mouth*. It is therefore from the pastors of the Church alone we can learn the true Faith, since they alone are authorized to preach it, and in hearing them we hear Christ Himself. Hence St. Paul says, "How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? . . . And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent, . . ." [Rom. 10: 14, 15]. Now, the pastors of the Church were ordained and sent by Jesus Christ to "teach all nations, and to preach the Gospel to every creature," consequently it is only from them that the truths of the Gospel can be learned.

PART 2

SECTION III: Proofs, with regard to those who are separated from the Church

In this section we are to consider what judgment the Scriptures pronounce on all who are separated from the Church of Christ by teaching and believing doctrines contrary to hers; and, for the greater clearness, we shall consider first those who begin such separation, and teach

false doctrine, and then those who follow such leaders. With regard to the former:

1. Our blessed Savior, foretelling the coming of false teachers, says, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves, by their fruits ye shall know them;" and then He tells us, going on with the similitude of a tree, what shall be the portion of such false prophets. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire," [Mat. 7: 15,19]. Such is the fate of false teachers, according to Jesus Christ. St. Paul describes them in the same light, and exhorts the pastors of the Church to watch against them, that they may prevent the seduction of the flock. "I know that after my departure ravenous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock: and of your own selves shall arise men speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them; therefore watch," [Acts 20: 29]. Such is the idea the Word of God gives of all who depart from the doctrine of the Church of Christ, and teach falsehood; they are ravenous wolves, seducers of the people, who speak perverse things, and whose end is Hell-fire.

2. St. Paul, concluding his Epistle to the Romans, warns them against such teachers in these words: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who cause dissensions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and to avoid them: for they that are such serve not Christ our

Lord, but their own belly, and by pleasing speeches and good words seduce the hearts of the innocent," [Rom. 16: 17]. Can such as these, who cause dissensions contrary to the ancient doctrine, and seduce the souls redeemed by the Blood of Jesus, who are not servants of Christ, but His enemies, and are slaves to their own belly — can these, I say, be in the way of salvation? Alas! the same holy Apostle describes their fate in another text, saying, "That they are enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame," [Philip. 3: 18].

3. In St. Paul's absence some false teachers had come in among the Galatians, and persuaded them that it was necessary for salvation to join circumcision with the Gospel; on this account the Apostle writes his epistle to correct this error; and though it was but an error on one point, and apparently, not of great importance, yet, because it was false doctrine, the holy Apostle condemns it: "I wonder how you are so soon removed from him that called you to the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel: which is not another; only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach a Gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we, I said before, I say now again, if anyone preach to you a Gospel besides that which ye have received, let him be accursed," [Gal. 1:

6]. This shows, indeed, the crime and fate of false teachers, though their doctrine was false only on a single point.

4. St. Peter describes these unhappy men in the most dreadful colors. "There shall be among you lying teachers, who shall bring sects of perdition" [or, as the Protestant translation has it, *damnable heresies*], "and deny the Lord who bought them, bringing on them their destruction slumbereth not," [ver. 3]. "The Lord knoweth how . . . to reserve the unjust unto the day of Judgment to be tormented; and especially them who . . . despise governments, audacious, pleasing themselves, they fear not to bring in sects blaspheming," [ver. 9] leaving the right way, they have gone astray, [ver. 15]. "These are wells without water, and clouds tossed with whirlwinds to whom the mist of darkness is reserved," [ver. 17]. Good God! what a dreadful state to be in!

5. St. Paul, speaking of such as are led away by what St. Peter calls *damnable heresies*, says, "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid; knowing that he that is such and one is subverted and sinneth being condemned by his own judgment," [Tit. 3: 10]. Other offenders are judged and cast out of the Church by the sentence of the pastors; but heretics, more unhappy, leave the Church of their own accord, and by so doing give judgment and sentence against their own souls.

6. St. John brands all such false teachers who go out from the true Church of Christ with the name of Anti-Christ. "Even now," says he, "there are become many Anti-Christ. . . . They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us; but that they may be manifest that they are not all of us," [1 John 2: 18]. And again he says, "Many seducers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; this is a seducer and an antichrist," [2 John, ver. 7].

And to show that not only, those who deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ, but also those who do not embrace His doctrine, fall under the same condemnation, he immediately adds, "Whosoever revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that continueth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and the Son," [ver. 9]. What stronger terms could be used to show that all who are separated from the Church of Christ, and receive not His sacred doctrine, are out of the way of salvation?

Now, if all who break off from the Church of Christ, and teach false doctrine, contrary to the faith once revealed to her, and which shall never depart out of her mouth, are condemned in such strong and severe terms by the Holy Ghost in His Holy Scriptures, in what condition must those be who follow these false teachers, and hold such pernicious doctrine? Is there the smallest reason to suppose that salvation can

possibly be found among "ravenous wolves, seducers of the flock, speakers of perverse things?" Is it possible to be saved in "pernicious sects, damnable heresies, false doctrines, dissensions, and offenses contrary to the doctrine received from the Apostles"? Can those be safe guides to Heaven whom the Word of God declares to be "enemies of the Cross of Christ," and "antichrists, whose end is destruction," who fall under the curse of the Apostle, "to whom the mist of darkness is reserved?" But let us hear the Scripture itself for the answer to these questions.

(1) St. Paul, in the black catalog he gives of the works of the flesh, reckons *sects*, or, as the Protestant translation has it, heresies, as one of them; and, classing this with *idolatry, witchcraft, and dissensions*, he concludes, in these words, — "*Of which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God.*" [Gal. 5: 20]

those seduced by false prophets not saved

(2) Our Savior, foretelling the evils of the latter times, says, "And many false prophets shall arise, and shall seduce many . . . but he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved," [Mat. 24: 11, 13]. Is it not evident from this that those who are seduced by these false prophets shall not be saved? And that salvation will be the happy lot only of those who persevere in the faith, and love of Christ to the end?

(3) St. Peter, foretelling that "there shall be lying teachers, who shall bring in damnable heresies, and bring upon themselves swift destruction," immediately adds, "and many shall follow their riotousness" [or, as the Protestant translation has it, their *pernicious ways*], "through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of," [2 Pet. 2: 2]. Now, to whom are these ways pernicious but to those who follow them?

(4) The whole Epistle of St. Jude contains a description of all those who follow these pernicious ways, and of their miserable fate, and says, "That they are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own confusion; wandering stars, to whom the storm of darkness is reserved for ever," [ver. 13].

(5) St. Paul declares, "That in the last times some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, and having their consciences seared," [1 Tim. 4: 1]. Can any one imagine salvation possible to those who follow the spirit of error as their guide, and embrace the doctrine of devils?

(6) The same holy Apostle, giving an ample description of heretics, says, among other things, that they have an appearance of godliness, but deny the power thereof; ever learning, and never attaining the knowledge of the truth: . . . that they are men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith: . . . and that being evil men and seducers, they grow worse and worse; erring, and driving into error," [2 Tim.

3: 5]. What grounds can such as these have to expect salvation?

(7) But our blessed Savior in one short sentence clearly shows the miserable fate of all those who follow these teachers when He says, "They are blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the pit," [Mat. 15: 14]; which evidently shows that the lot of both shall be the same, and that all the above condemnations of false teachers equally apply to such as follow them.

(8) These testimonies of Scripture are so strong and convincing that the Church of England fairly acknowledges the truth of what they contain, and in the eighteenth of her Thirty-nine Articles declares, "That those ARE TO BE HAD ACCURSED that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature; for the Holy Scripture doth set out to us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby man must be saved." And we have evidently seen above that salvation can never be had in Him without believing, the sacred doctrine which He revealed to the world.

(9) We shall add one more proof with regard to Jews, Muhammadans, heathens, and idolaters, and all who know not the true God, nor Jesus Christ His Son, and who do not obey His Gospel. Of these the Scripture says: "The Gentiles have stuck fast in the destruction which they prepared . . .

The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and the nations that forget God," [Ps. 9: 16,18]. "The Lord shall reign to eternity; yea, forever and ever. Ye Gentiles [*the heathens*] shall perish from His land," [Ps. 10: 16]. But particularly what follows: — "Jesus Christ shall be revealed from Heaven with the Angels of His power in a flame of fire, yielding vengeance to them who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction from the face of Our Lord, and from the glory of His power," [2 Thess. 1: 7]. This is no less clear and precise than it is dreadful and terrible, and cuts off all ground of evasion, as it declares in express terms that all who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of Christ, shall be lost forever; which evidently shows that the knowledge and belief of God, and of Jesus Christ, and obedience to His Gospel, are absolutely required by Him as essential conditions of salvation.

Q. 2. These proofs are all very strong indeed, but what is the result of all these reasonings and Scripture testimonies?

A. The consequence is self-evident that, since salvation cannot be had in any sect separated in faith from the Church of Christ, and teaching false doctrine, therefore the Church of Christ is the only way appointed by Almighty God in which we can be saved, and that out of her communion there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

not what God can do, but what God has done

Q. 3. Why do you say ordinary possibility of salvation? Is there any reason to suppose that God has reserved any extraordinary means of salvation for some who are not joined in communion with the Church of Christ by the true Faith?

A. No doubt it is [absolutely speaking] *possible* for God to save men by any means He pleases; and He could have saved all mankind through the merits of anyone thing that Jesus Christ did or suffered, without requiring such a severe sacrifice from Him as His death upon the Cross. But what God can do in this respect is nothing to our purpose: the great question is what He has done. Now, we see from the whole tenor of revelation that God has appointed true Faith in Jesus Christ, and the being a member of His Church, as conditions of salvation; that He has appointed them as essential conditions, so that none *will* or *can* be saved without them; that the Word of God points out no other possible means; that whatever *extraordinary* means He may sometimes use to bring people to His Church, yet, according to what He has said in the above texts, it is impossible He can have reserved any extraordinary means of salvation for those who live and die not joined in communion with the Church of Christ by true Faith, otherwise He would contradict Himself, which is impossible.

For instance, these two express declarations of Scripture, "The Lord daily added to the Church such as should be

saved," and "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," would not be true if there was any possibility for those to be saved who were not added to the Church, or did not believe. The same is equally true of the other texts, as will appear on considering them.

PART 3

uncharitable doctrine? true charity

Q. 4. Is it not a very uncharitable doctrine, to say that none can be saved out of the Church, or who do not believe as the Church does?

A. If this doctrine were a mere human opinion, or the result indeed of human reasoning, it might be called uncharitable; but it is a doctrine into which mere human reason does not enter. It is a point which depends solely on the will of the Almighty; and the only question is to know what He has been pleased to decide concerning it. Now, His Holy Scriptures declare in the plainest terms that He has been pleased to ordain that none shall be saved out of the Church of Christ, or without the true Faith; and who shall dare to say, a *doctrine* taught and declared by God is *uncharitable*?

God is not obliged to save anyone

But the mistake into which many fall arises from not reflecting that God is not obliged to save anyone. He

pursued the fallen Angels with the utmost rigor of justice, and He could justly have treated man in the same manner. If, therefore, He is pleased to offer salvation to mankind through the merits of Jesus Christ, this is the effect of His infinite mercy; and as He is perfect master of His Own gifts, He is at full liberty to require whatever conditions He pleases for bestowing them upon us. Now, the whole tenor of His revealed will declares that He requires our being members of His Church, and having the true Faith of Jesus Christ, as indispensable conditions of salvation and who shall dare to find fault with Him for doing so? Or who shall say, it is uncharitable to think and believe what He has so expressly and so repeatedly declared in His Holy Scriptures?

Observe further, that it is not the Catholic Church alone that holds this doctrine. We have seen that the founders of the Protestant Church of Scotland hold, in express terms, that "out of the true Church of Christ there is no ordinary possibility of salvation," and have inserted it as an article of their Faith in the public authentic standard of their religion, the "Confession of Faith," which all her ministers must subscribe.

The Church of England also, in the same manner, declares, as an article of her Creed, "That except a man do keep the Catholic faith whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly;" and assures her members that this Creed can be proved by the most evident texts of Holy

Scripture; which, therefore, all her ministers must subscribe. Moreover, she affirms that "those are to be accursed who presume to say that every man (*even though he be not in the true Faith of Jesus Christ*) shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth."

If, therefore, this doctrine be deemed uncharitable, the Churches both of England and Scotland must evidently fall under the condemnation. It is true, indeed, that, though the founders of these Churches, convinced by the repeated and evident testimonies of the Word of God, professed this truth, and inserted it in the public standards of their religion, yet their posterity now disclaim it, and accuse the Catholic Church of being uncharitable for holding it; but this only shows their inconsistency, and proves that they are devoid of all certainty in what they believe; for if it was a Divine truth, when these religions were founded, that *out of the true Church, and without the Catholic Faith*, there is no salvation, it must be so still, and if their first founders were mistaken on this point, what security can their followers now have for any other thing they taught?

But the Catholic Church, always consistent and uniform in her doctrine, always preserving *the words once put in her mouth by her Divine Master*, at all times and in all ages has believed and taught the same doctrine as a truth revealed by God, that "out of the true Church of Christ, and without

His true Faith, there is no possibility of salvation;" and the most authentic public testimony of her enemies proves that this is the doctrine of Jesus, and of His holy gospel, whatever private persons, from selfish and interested motives, may say to the contrary. Neither is she afraid of being thought uncharitable on this account. On the contrary, she considers it the height of charity to warn men of their danger, in an affair of such immense importance as is that of their eternal salvation; and, with compassion for their situation, she uses every means in her power, particularly fervent prayer to God, for the conversion of all who are out of the true way, that they may be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved.

This is true charity; for charity is a virtue of the heart, which causes a man to love his neighbor's soul, and endeavor to promote his salvation; and only that opinion deserves to be called charitable which tends to excite and promote this disposition; whereas the contrary, which renders a man careless and indifferent about his neighbor's soul, is truly uncharitable.

It is plain, therefore, that the charge of being uncharitable is only misrepresentation and slander, employed to render the Catholic Church and her doctrine odious. Her enemies saw that want of charity was a crime shocking to every well-disposed mind, and must excite odium and aversion, if

charged on her. They knew their followers, who were ever ready to believe anything against her, would take no pains to examine the grounds for such a charge — would take it for granted that she was guilty upon their bold assertion; and the result has verified their opinion. But the smallest attention must show that her conduct is the effect of genuine charity. Was St. Paul uncharitable when he declared that "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, etc., shall possess the kingdom of God?" [1 Cor. 6: 9]; or when he pronounced "a curse upon anyone, though an Angel from Heaven, who should preach any other gospel than what he had preached?" [Gal. 1: 8] Quite the contrary: it was his ardent charity and zeal for their salvation which made him so earnest in warning them of their danger.

How then can the Catholic Church be deemed uncharitable for only saying what He declares, and from the same charitable motive? An unfavorable opinion she certainly has of all those who are not of her communion; but to call this uncharitable, is a mere imposition on the unreflecting.

dictates of conscience, sufficient?

Q. 5. But if a man act according to the dictates of his conscience, and follow exactly the light of reason which God has implanted in him for his guide, is that not sufficient to bring him to salvation?

A. This is, indeed, a specious proposition; but a fallacy lurks under it. When man was created, his reason was then an enlightened reason. Illuminated by the grace of original righteousness, with which his soul was adorned, reason and conscience were safe guides to conduct him in the way of salvation. But by sin this light was miserably darkened, and his reason clouded by ignorance and error. It was not, indeed, entirely extinguished; it still clearly teaches him many great truths, but it is at present so influenced by pride, passion, prejudice, and other such corrupt motives, that in many instances it serves only to confirm him in error, by giving an appearance of reason to the suggestions of self-love and passion. This is too commonly the case even in natural things; but in the supernatural, in things relating to God and eternity, our reason, if left to itself, is miserably blind. To remedy this, God has given us the light of Faith as a sure and safe guide to conduct us to salvation, appointing His Holy Church the guardian and depository of this heavenly light; consequently, though a man may pretend to act according to reason and conscience, and even flatter himself that he does so, yet reason and conscience, if not enlightened and guided by True Faith, can never bring him to salvation.

Q. 6. Does Holy Scripture give any light in this matter?

A. Nothing can be more striking than the words of Holy Scripture. "There is a way," says the wise man, "that

seemeth right to a man, but the ends thereof lead to death," [Prov. 14: 12]. This is repeated, [Prov. 16: 25]. What can be more plain than this, to show that a man may act according to what he thinks the light of reason and conscience, persuaded he is doing right, and yet, in fact, be only running on in the way to perdition? And do not all those who are seduced by false prophets, and false teachers, think they are in the right way? Is it not under the pretext of acting according to conscience that they are seduced? And yet the Mouth of Truth itself has declared, that "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the pit," [Matt. 15: 14].

In order to show us to what excess of wickedness man may go under the pretense of following his conscience, the same Eternal Truth says to His Apostles, "The hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God a service," [John 16: 2]; but observe what He adds, — "And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father nor Me," [ver. 3]. Which shows that if one has not the true knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, which can be obtained only through True Faith, there is no enormity of which he is not capable while thinking he is acting according to reason and conscience. Had we only the light of reason to direct us, we would be justified in following it; but as God has given us an external guide in His Holy Church, to assist and correct our blinded reason by the light of Faith, our reason alone, unassisted by this guide, can never be sufficient for salvation.

Nothing will set this in a clearer light than a few examples.

Conscience tells a heathen that it is not only lawful, but a duty to worship and offer sacrifice to idols, the work of men's hands. Will his doing so, according to his conscience, save him? Or will these acts of idolatry be innocent or agreeable in the sight of God, because they are performed, according to conscience? The answer which the Word of God gives to this question; to which add that of the wise man, — The idol that is made by hands is cursed, as well as he that made it, for that which is made, together with him that made it, shall suffer torments," [Wis. 14: 8, 10]; also, "He that sacrificeth to gods shall be put to death, save only to the Lord," [Exod. 22: 20].

In like manner, a Jew's conscience tells him that he may lawfully and meritoriously blaspheme Jesus Christ, and approve the conduct of his forefathers in putting Him to death upon a tree. Will such blasphemy save him, because it is according to the dictates of his conscience? The Holy Ghost by the mouth of St. Paul says, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *anathema*," that is, "accursed," [1 Cor. 16: 22].

A Mahometan is taught by his conscience that it would be a crime to believe in Jesus Christ, and not believe in Mahomet; will this impious conscience save him? The Scripture assures

us that "there is no other name given to men under Heaven by which we can be saved," but the name of Jesus only; and "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remaineth on him."

All the various sects which have been separated from the True Church, in every age, have uniformly calumniated and slandered her, speaking evil of the truth professed by her, believing in their conscience that this was not only lawful, but highly meritorious. Will calumnies and slanders against the Church of Jesus Christ save them because of their approving conscience? The Word of God declares, "That the nation and the kingdom that will not serve her shall perish" and "there shall be lying teachers who shall bring in damnable heresies, bringing upon themselves swift destruction, through how the way of truth shall be evil spoken of," [2 Pet. 2: 1].

In all these, and similar cases, their conscience is their greatest crime, and shows to what a height of impiety conscience and reason can lead us, when under the influence of pride, passion, prejudice, and self-love. Conscience and reason, therefore, can never be safe guides to salvation, unless directed by the sacred light of revealed truth.

PART 4

invincible ignnorange; dangerous mistake

Q. 7. But suppose a person to be *invincibly ignorant* of the Faith of Jesus Christ and His Church, will not this *invincible ignorance* save him?

A. This is also a very specious proposition, and I am afraid that from not being properly considered it is an occasion of a dangerous mistake to many; we shall therefore endeavor to examine it thoroughly. And here we must observe, that two different questions are commonly mixed together when people speak of invincible ignorance: the first is, *Will a person who is invincibly ignorant of the true Faith or Church of Christ be condemned precisely on account of that ignorance? That is, will that ignorance be imputed to him as a crime? Or will this his invincible ignorance excuse him from the guilt of not believing?* To this I reply, that as no man can be guilty of a sin in not doing what is absolutely out of his power, therefore a person who is invincibly ignorant of the true Faith and Church of Christ will not be condemned on account of that ignorance; such ignorance will not be imputed to him as a crime, but will undoubtedly excuse him from the guilt of disbelief: in this all divines agree without doubt or hesitation. A heathen, for example, who never heard of Jesus Christ, will not be condemned as criminal precisely for want of Faith in Him; a heretic who has never had any knowledge of the True Church of Christ will not be condemned as guilty because he is not joined in communion with that Church. So far, the first question admits of no dispute. The second question is this, *Can a*

person invincibly ignorant of the True Faith or Church of Jesus, and living and dying, in that state, be saved? This is a highly important but a very different question from the former, though too frequently confounded with it. Now, to answer this question clearly and distinctly we must consider two different cases: first, that of Mahometans, Jews, and heathens, who, never having heard of Jesus Christ or of His religion, are invincibly ignorant of it; and, secondly, that of all the different sects of Christians who are separated from the True Church of Christ by heresy.

Q. 8. What then is to be said of all those Mahometans, Jews, and heathens, who, never having heard of Jesus Christ or of His religion, are therefore invincibly ignorant of both? Can they be saved, if they live and die in that state?

A. The plain answer to this is that they cannot be saved; that not one of these "can enter into the kingdom of God." It is true, as we have seen above, they will not be condemned precisely because they have not the faith of Christ, of which they are invincibly ignorant. But the faith of Christ, though an essential condition of salvation, is but one condition; others also are required.

And though invincible ignorance will certainly save a man from sin, in not knowing that of which he is invincibly ignorant, yet it is impossible to suppose that this invincible ignorance on one point will supply the want of all other conditions required. Now, all those we here speak of are in

the state of Original Sin, "aliens from God, and children of wrath," being unBaptized; and it is an article of Christian Faith, that, unless Original Sin be washed away by the grace of Baptism, there is no salvation; for Christ Himself expressly declares, "Amen, amen, I say to thee, except a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," [John 3: 5]. And, indeed, if even the children of Christian parents, who die without Baptism, cannot go to Heaven, how much less can those who, besides being unBaptized, live and die in ignorance of the true God, of Jesus Christ and His Faith, and, on that account, may be supposed to have also committed many actual sins. Nay, to imagine that heathens, Mahometans, or Jews who live and die in that state can be saved, is to suppose that ignorance will save worshipers of idols, of Mahomet, and blasphemers of Jesus Christ, in the guilt of actual as well as Original Sin; which is putting them upon a better footing than Christians themselves and their children. The fate of all such the Scripture decides as follows: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with the Angel of His power, in a flame of fire, yielding vengeance to them who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction, from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His power," [2 Thess. 1: 7]. This is precise, indeed — a clear and decisive answer to the present question.

Q. 9. What judgment does the Scripture pass on all those Christians who are separated from the Church by heresy? Can they be saved if they be in invincible ignorance, and live and die in their state of separation from the True Church of Christ?

A. These are in a very different state from Mahometans, Jews, and heathens, provided they have true Baptism among them; for if they either have no Baptism, or have altered the form of giving it ordained by Christ, then they are in no better state as to the possibility of their salvation than heathens, though they may assume the name of Christians. But if they have valid Baptism, then they are, by it, made true members of the Church of Christ, and those who die young, in their Baptismal innocence, shall undoubtedly be saved. But as to those among them who come to the years of discretion, are educated in a false faith, and live and die in a state of separation from the communion of the Church of Christ, we also must distinguish between two different cases. The first is that of those who either live among Catholics or have Catholics living in the same country with them; who know there are such persons, and often hear of them. The second regards those who have no such knowledge, and who seldom or never hear Catholics spoken of except in a false and odious light.

Q. 10. What is to be said of those who live among Catholics? If they be in invincible ignorance, and die in their

state of separation, can they be saved?

A. It is next to impossible for anyone of this class to be in a state of invincible ignorance; for, to be invincibly ignorant, three things are necessarily required, — *first, that a person have a real and sincere desire of knowing the truth;* for if he be cold and indifferent about an affair of such importance as his eternal salvation; if he be careless whether he be in the right way or not; if, enslaved to this present life, he take no concern about the next, it is manifest that an ignorance arising from this disposition is *voluntary ignorance*, and therefore highly culpable in the sight of God. It will be still more so if a person be positively unwilling to seek the truth from the fear of worldly inconvenience, and therefore avoid every opportunity of knowing it. Of these the Scripture says, "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to Hell; who have said to God, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways," [Job 21: 13]. *Secondly*, In order that one be invincibly ignorant, it is required, *that he be sincerely resolved to embrace the truth wherever he may find it, and whatever it may cost him.* For if he be not fully resolved to follow the will of God, wherever it shall appear in all things necessary to salvation if, on the contrary, he, be so disposed that he rather would neglect his duty and hazard his soul than offend his friends or expose himself to some temporal loss or disadvantage, his ignorance is culpable, and can never excuse him before his Creator. Of this Our Savior says, "He that loveth father or

mother, or son or daughter, more than Me, is not worthy of Me," [Matt. 10: 37]. The *third* thing necessary for a person to be in invincible ignorance is, *that he sincerely use his best endeavors to know his duty, and particularly, that he recommend the matter earnestly to Almighty God, and pray for light and direction from Him.* For, whatever desire he may have of knowing the truth, if he does not use the proper means of finding it, his ignorance is *not invincible but voluntary*. Ignorance is invincible only when a person has a sincere desire to know the truth, with a full resolution to embrace it, but. either has no possible means of knowing it, or after using his best endeavors, is unable to discover it. Therefore, if a person be deficient in seeking to know his duty, his ignorance is not invincible — it is his own fault that he does not know it; and if inattention, indifference, worldly motives, or unjust prejudices influence his judgment, and cause it to yield to the bias of education, he has *neither invincible ignorance nor the fear of God.*

Now, it is inconsistent with the goodness, and promises of God, that a person brought up in a false religion, but who is in the state supposed by these three conditions, and uses his best endeavors to know the truth, should be left in invincible ignorance of it; but if, from his attachment to the world, to sensual or selfish objects, he be not so disposed, and neglect the proper means for arriving at the truth, then his ignorance is *voluntary and culpable*, not *invincible*.

Q. 11. But what if doubt never rises in his mind, and he goes on *bona fide*, in the way in which he was brought up?

A. It is a mistake to suppose that a formal doubt is necessary to render one's ignorance of his duty voluntary and culpable; it is enough that there be sufficient reason for doubting, though from his unjust prejudices, obstinacy, pride, or other evil dispositions of the heart, he hinder these reasons from exciting a formal doubt in his mind. Saul had no doubt when he offered sacrifice before the prophet Samuel came; on the contrary, he was persuaded that he had the strongest reasons for doing so, yet he was condemned for that very action, and himself and his family rejected by Almighty God. The Jews believed that they were acting well when they put our Savior to death; nay, their high priest declared in full council that it was expedient for the good and safety of the nation that they should do so. They were grossly mistaken, indeed, and sadly ignorant of their duty; but their ignorance was culpable, and they were severely condemned for what they did, though it was done in ignorance. And indeed all who act from a false and erroneous conscience are highly blamable for having such a conscience, though they have never entertained any formal doubt. Nay, their not having such a doubt when they have just and solid grounds for doubting, rather renders them the more guilty, because it shows greater corruption of the heart, greater depravity of disposition. A person brought up in a false faith which the Scripture calls *sects of perdition*,

doctrines of devils, perverse things, lies, and hypocrisy — and who has heard of the True Church of Christ, which condemns all these sects, and sees their divisions and dissensions has always before his eyes the strongest reason to doubt the safety of his own state.

If he make any examination with sincere dispositions of heart, he must be convinced that he is in the wrong; and the more he examines, the more clearly will he see it, — for this plain reason, that it is simply impossible that *false doctrine, lies, and hypocrisy* should ever be supported by solid arguments sufficient to satisfy a reasonable person, who sincerely seeks the truth, and begs light from God to direct him in the search. Hence, if such a person never doubts, but goes on, as is supposed, *bona fide*, in his own way, notwithstanding the strong grounds of doubt which he daily has before his eyes, this evidently shows either that he is supinely negligent in the concerns of his soul, or that his heart is totally blinded by passion and prejudice.

There were many such persons among the Jews and heathens in the time of the Apostles, who notwithstanding the splendid light of truth which these holy preachers everywhere displayed, and which was the most powerful reason for leading them to doubt of their superstitions, were so far from having such doubts, that they thought by killing the Apostles they did God a service. Whence did this arise? St. Paul himself informs us: "We renounce," says he, "the

hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor adulterating the Word of God, but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Here he describes the strange light of the truth which he preached; yet this light was hidden to great numbers, and he immediately gives the reason: "And if our gospel be also hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of unbelievers, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God, should not shine upon them," [2 Cor. 4: 2]. Behold the real cause of their incredulity: they are so enslaved to the things of this world by the depravity of their heart, and the devil so blinds them that they cannot see the light; but ignorance arising from such depraved dispositions is a guilty, a voluntary ignorance and therefore never can excuse them.

PART 5

Q. 12. Are not the members of the Church of Christ, also, when of sufficient age, obliged to examine whether they be in the right way or not, as well as those who are brought up in any sect separated from the True Church?

A. There is nothing which the Church of Christ has more earnestly desired, than that her children should be thoroughly instructed in their religion, and in the grounds of it, as far as they are capable. For this end she strictly commands her pastors to be assiduous in instructing their

people from their earliest years, well knowing that the more they know of their religion, the more they must be attached to it. The True Church of Christ is the work of God, the doctrine she teaches contains the truths of God; now, the more attentively truth is examined, the more illustrious it must appear; and Almighty God has given such splendid testimony to the truth of His religion, that the more it is examined with sincerity, the more it convinces and delights. Here, then, lies the difference: when a member of the Church of Christ considers his religion, he cannot have any reasonable grounds of doubt concerning it, and the more he examines, the more convinced he must be of its truth. But one brought up in a false religion, if he thinks at all, cannot fail to perceive the strongest grounds of doubt; and the more he examines, the more its falsehood must appear, for falsehood can never bear the light of unbiased and impartial examination.

Q. 13. But how comes it that we see many good men and men of learning among all sects of Christians, some of which must undoubtedly be false, as they contradict and condemn one another?

good life in eyes of world, blameable in sight of God

A. To understand this we must observe that the Word of God declares that God wills, "all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." [1 Tim. 2: 4] In consequence of this sincere desire God never fails to give to

all such outward helps and inward graces as He sees sufficient to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, if they co-operate with them; but if they shut their eyes against His light — if, from the corruption of their heart, they pay no regard to His graces — then they remain in their ignorance; but their ignorance is voluntary in its cause, and a just punishment of their own fault.

Now, though many of those who are brought up in a false religion may not live good lives as to moral honesty in the eyes of the world, yet they may be very blamable in the sight of God, and, their secret passions and attachments to the things of this life, may put an effectual obstacle to His merciful design of bringing them to the knowledge of His truth. The proud Pharisee was a just man in the eyes of the world, and yet he was condemned by Almighty God for the secret pride of his heart. And as to men of learning who are to be found in a false religion, their learning does not exempt them from pride and passion; nay, the Word of God assures us that "knowledge puffeth up;" [1 Cor. 8: 1] and, generally speaking, where there is not true humility and the love of God, the more learning there is, the more pride, self-conceit, desire of glory, and obstinacy of heart, and consequently the more opposition to Faith; for Jesus Christ Himself says to the Jews, whose hardened hearts resisted all the evidence of His doctrine and miracles, "How can ye believe who receive glory from one another, and the glory which is from God alone ye do not seek?" [John 5: 44]

There were, no doubt, many learned people both among the Jews and Gentiles when the gospel was first preached by the Apostles, and yet, notwithstanding the numberless miracles which they wrought in proof of its being from God, St. Paul expressly tells us that it was "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness;" [1 Cor. 1: 23] because, notwithstanding all their learning, their pride, passions and prejudices *so blinded their minds, that the light of the gospel shone upon them in vain.* It is no matter of surprise, therefore, to see learned men in a false religion, especially as their learning is commonly of a worldly kind, for *Faith is a gift of God;* and it is not the knowledge of the head, but humility and sincerity of the heart, which disposes a soul to receive that gift from Him; yea, Christ Himself expressly says, "that God hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them to little ones." [Mat. 11: 25] We must conclude, then, that among those who are brought up in a false religion, and separated from the Church of Christ, but who know that there is a Church which declares herself to be the only True Church of Christ, who have the opportunity of hearing of her, and of being acquainted with those of her Communion, it is highly improbable *invincible ignorance* can have any place. But if any should be found among them invincibly ignorant, their state will be the same as that of persons who have never had an opportunity of knowing any other than the false religion they are in.

Q. 14. What, then, is to be said of those who, being brought up in a false religion, have no opportunity of hearing of the True Church and Faith of Christ, or who hear of it only in a false and odious light? Can such as these be saved if they live and die in their separation from the Communion of the Church of Christ, and in invincible ignorance of the truth?

A. The learned author of the book called *Charity and Truth*, who seems willing to go as far as possible in favor of those who are not joined in the Communion of the Church of Christ, candidly owns, that it is quite uncertain if any such shall be saved, even though in invincible ignorance; for in laying down the true state of the question, he says, "The meaning is that no one is saved unless he be in the Catholic Communion either actually or virtually, either in fact or in desire; and that we are not sure, generally speaking, that anyone is saved out of the Catholic Church, who is invincibly ignorant of the True Church, and of the True Religion (Part 1, Q. 3.) The fact is, there is not one single testimony of the Holy Scripture which gives reason to think that anyone will be saved out of that Communion; but there are many, as we have seen above, which very strongly declare the contrary.

All the reasons which are brought in favor of those who are out of the Church, are taken from imaginary cases and from our imperfect ideas of the goodness of God, or from the idea which some form to themselves of what is meant by being a

member of the True Church; and those people of whom we speak in the present question afford the principal grounds of these reasonings.

strongest reason to doubt if there ever were such a case

This is the line of argument. Suppose a man born and Baptized in a heretical sect, and afterwards, when he comes of age, to be placed in such circumstances as prevent his ever hearing of the True Religion, except in such false and odious terms as serve only to make him detest it, and to make him more and more attached to his own way, and, on this account, to be in invincible ignorance of the truth: it is acknowledged by all, that this man, by Baptism, is made a member of the Church of Christ, and that, if he die before he comes to the use of reason, he will certainly be saved in his Baptismal innocence. Let us now suppose further, that, when he comes to age, he continues to live an innocent life, and, co-operating with the graces which God bestows upon him, perseveres in his innocence, and does his best, according to his knowledge, and would do better if he knew it: is it not inconsistent with the goodness of God to suppose that such a man, living and dying in this state, would be lost? Is he not, in the sight of God, a real member of the Church of Christ, though not joined in her Communion? And, if he die in his innocence, must he not be saved?

Such is the argument proposed; and it has a specious appearance. But it must be observed that there is the strongest reason to doubt if there ever was, or ever shall be, such a case.

(1) There is not the smallest ground in Scripture to suppose it.

(2) As it is impossible for man, in his present fallen state, to preserve his Baptismal innocence for any space of time, much less to persevere in it to the end of life, without a special and extraordinary grace from God; and, as a grace of this kind is justly esteemed one of the most singular favors given by God to His faithful servants, who are members of His Church, and enjoy all the powerful helps that are only to be found in her Communion, to enable them to do so; — is it to be supposed that He will bestow this priceless favor upon anyone who is out of her Communion, and consequently deprived of all these helps? And if it be supposed that he loses his Baptismal innocence by committing a mortal sin, but recovers the grace of justification by a sincere repentance, the difficulty still increases. For a repentance without the help of the Sacraments sufficient to obtain the grace of justification includes a perfect contrition, founded on the love of God above all things; a favor so seldom granted to sinners, even in the Church itself, that the Sacrament of Penance is appointed by Jesus Christ as the standing means of supplying our deficiency in that respect.

Now, what likelihood is there that Almighty God will bestow so very singular a favor upon one who has lost his innocence, and is not in the Communion of His Church to obtain the helps which she affords for recovering it?

But, (3) let us suppose the case to happen as proposed, and that Almighty God gives this man these extraordinary graces by which he preserves his Baptismal innocence to the last, dies in the Grace of God, and goes to Heaven, — would not this be making God contradict Himself, and act directly contrary to the whole tenor of His revealed will? All the testimonies of Scripture concur to prove that God has appointed True Faith in Jesus Christ, and the being in Communion with the Church of Christ, as necessary conditions of salvation; and yet, in the present case, the person would be saved who had not had the True Faith in Jesus Christ, had not been in Communion with His Church, but who had lived and died in a heretical Communion. There is therefore the greatest reason to believe that such a case will never happen, but that a person brought up in heresy, and invincibly ignorant of the truth, being deprived of the helps and graces which are the consequences of the True Faith, and which are only found in the true Church, will not preserve his innocence, but, continuing in heresy, shall die in his sins, and be lost; not precisely because he had not the True Faith, of which he is supposed to be invincibly ignorant, but for the other sins of which he dies guilty.

Q. 15. But can none who are in heresy, and in invincible ignorance of the truth, be saved?

A. God forbid we should say so! All the above reasons only prove that if they live and die in that state they shall not be saved, and that according to the present providence they cannot be saved; but the great God is able to take them out of that state, to cure even their ignorance though invincible to them in their present situation, to bring them to the knowledge of the True Faith, to the Communion of His Holy Church, and to salvation: and we further add, that if He be pleased, of His infinite mercy, to save any who are at present in invincible ignorance of the truth, in order to act consistently with Himself, and with His Holy Word, He will undoubtedly bring them to the union of His Holy Church for that purpose before they die.

Q. 16. Are there any grounds in Scripture for this doctrine?

A. This doctrine is founded upon the most positive declarations of Scripture. For the Scripture lays down this fundamental truth, "The sure foundation of God standeth firm, having this seal: The Lord knoweth who are His." [2 Tim. 2: 19] That is, God, from all eternity, knows those who, by co-operating with the graces He shall bestow upon them, will persevere to the end in His Faith and love, and be happy with Him forever. Now, to all mankind, without exception, and in whatever state, heathen, Muhammadan, Jew, or

heretic, in vincible or in invincible ignorance, God, through the merits of Christ, and for His sake, gives such graces as He sees proper for their present state, with a view to their eternal salvation; if they comply with those He gives, and cooperate with them, He will then give them more and greater, till He brings them at last to that happy end; but if they resist and abuse those graces they receive, no more will be given them, and they will be left to their own ways, as the just punishment of their ingratitude.

Those, therefore, whom Almighty God foresees will make a proper use of His graces, and be saved, those He ordains to eternal life; and all such the Scripture assures us He will in His own good time, and in the way and manner He sees proper, bring to the knowledge of the True Faith, and to the Communion of His Holy Church. Thus, "The Lord daily added to the Church such as should be saved." [Acts 2: 47] Now, what the Lord daily did in the time of the Apostles, He daily will continue to do till the end of the world; and as none could be saved who were not added to the Church in those days, so neither can any afterwards be; for there is no new revelation since the Apostles' time, discovering a different way to salvation. Again the Scripture says, that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," [Acts 13: 48] — that is, were brought to the True Faith which the Apostles preached: the same then will be done ever afterwards; for as then none were ordained to eternal life who did not believe, so neither will there be any afterwards.

Our Savior Himself decides this point in the clearest terms when He says, "Other sheep I have who are not of this fold; them also I MUST BRING, and they SHALL hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." [John 10: 16] Here He manifestly speaks of those who had not as yet heard His voice, but were either Jews or heathens, and not united in the fold of His Apostles and other disciples; yet He calls them His sheep, because "the Lord knoweth who are His," and He foreknew who would cooperate with His grace and follow His voice; now He expressly declares, "them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice." It was not enough for their salvation that they were ready in the disposition of their hearts to answer His call, and to do better if they knew better; it was necessary they should actually be brought to the Communion of His own fold, "them also I must bring;" it was necessary they should have the True Faith of Christ, "and they shall hear My voice," in order to secure their salvation; for, as He says a little after, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall snatch them out of My hand." [John 10: 27]

This will still further appear from the account which St. Paul gives of the several steps of Divine Providence in the salvation of the elect, and of the principal graces bestowed upon them for that great end; "for whom He foreknew," says

he, "He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; and whom He predestinated, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them he also glorified." [Rom. 8: 29] First, he lays down the "sure foundation of God," above mentioned, "which has this seal, The Lord knoweth who are His." [2 Tim. 2: 19] God, from all eternity, foreknew who would improve the talents He should in time bestow upon them, and who, persevering, to the end, should be His forever. Now, says the Apostle, "whom" He thus "foreknew He also predestinated to be conformable to the image of His Son;" that is, He preordained that all His elect should resemble Jesus Christ, by "putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, according to the image of Him that created Him." [Col. 3: 9]

To procure this conformity with Jesus Christ, the next step He takes is to *call them*; for, "whom He predestinated, them He also called" — namely, to the knowledge and Faith of Jesus Christ, and to the Communion of His Holy Church; that is, He gives them such internal graces, and so disposes all external circumstances, as effectually to bring them to this great happiness; and *whom* He thus called to the True Faith, "them He also justified" — that is, being brought to the True Faith, "without which it is impossible to please God," he continues to bestow still further graces upon them, of fear, hope, love of God, and sorrow for their sins, with which they, cooperating, are brought by means of His Holy Sacraments

to the grace of justification. Greater and greater graces are bestowed upon them, and they, persevering to the end in their co-operation, are received at last into eternal glory; for "whom He justified, them He also glorified." Here it is manifest that our being called to the Faith and Church of Jesus Christ is ordained by Almighty God as an essential step in the affair of salvation, a necessary condition to be performed, even, before we can be justified from the guilt of our sins, and consequently, that without True Faith, and out of the Communion of the Church of Christ, there is no possibility of salvation. It is no less manifest that, let a person be in any state whatsoever — heathen, Muhammadan, Jew, or heretic — if Almighty God foreknows that this person will cooperate with those graces which from all eternity He had resolved to bestow upon him, and continue faithful to the end, He will by no means permit him to live and die in his present state, but will so order matters out of the treasures of His Divine Wisdom, that sooner or later he shall be brought to the union of the Church of Christ, out of which he has ordained that salvation cannot be found.

PART 6

Q. 17. How can it be proven that in the above mentioned passage of St. Paul (Q. 16), is meant our vocation or calling to the Faith and Church of Christ?

A. Nothing is more evident from the whole tenor of the New Testament; for, wherever the object of our calling or vocation is spoken of, it is always declared to be the Faith, and Church of Christ. Thus St. Paul, speaking of his own vocation, says: "'It pleased Him who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son to me." [Gal. 1: 15] So, exhorting us to walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called, by humility and charity, he immediately adds the objects of our vocation as a most powerful motive for us to do so: "One body," says he, "one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." [Eph. 4: 4] Again, "Let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts wherein also ye are called in one body." [Col. 3: 15] Also, "We testified to every one of you that ye would walk worthy of God, Who hath called you to His Kingdom and glory;" [Thess. 2: 12] to His kingdom here, and to His glory hereafter. The object, therefore, of our vocation is the one Faith of Christ; the body of Christ, and the kingdom of Christ, which is His Church. Hence the same holy Apostle says in another place, "But ye are come to Mount Sion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the company of many thousands of Angels, and to the Church of the first-born who are written in Heaven." [Heb. 12: 22] See here the object of our vocation, the Church of Christ; and St. Peter says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, that ye may declare His virtues who hath called you out of darkness into His admirable light." [1 Pet. 2: 9] To be a

member, then, of this holy nation, to be one of this purchased people, to be brought to this admirable light of the True Faith, is the great end to which our calling brings us.

Q. 18. But how can we reconcile this with the infinite goodness of God, that none shall be saved without the True Faith of Christ, and without being in the Communion of His Church, since according to it by far the greater part of mankind must be lost, seeing that the number of those who have not the Faith, and are not in the Communion of His Church, always greatly exceeds the number of those who are?

A. That the greater number of mankind will be lost is a truth which Christ Himself declares when He, says that "many are called, but few are chosen," and that "many walk, in the broad road to destruction, but few there are that find the narrow way to life." The difficulty of reconciling this with the goodness of God will disappear if we consider what the Christian revelation teaches; for by it we learn that man, by the voluntary abuse of his free-will, having forfeited that happy state in which God had created him, rendered himself unworthy of any favor or mercy from God; so that God, with the greatest justice, could, if He pleased, have left him without remedy to that misery which sins deserved, as He actually did leave the fallen Angels. It was therefore the effect of His infinite goodness alone that God was pleased to

show any mercy to man; and still more so, to provide so unheard-of a remedy for his evils. "God so loved the world," says the Gospels, "that He gave His only begotten Son," to seek and save, those that were lost by dying upon a Cross for them. But as man, by the voluntary abuse of his free-will, had lost the favor of his God, therefore God decreed that none who come to the full use of their reason should reap the benefit of the redemption of Christ but by voluntary performance of the conditions which He requires from them; for Christ "is become the cause of eternal salvation to all that obey him." [Heb. 5: 9]

Man, by the miserable corruption of his nature by sin, was absolutely incapable of himself of performing these conditions; therefore God, out of the riches of His goodness, and the desire that all should be saved through the merits of Jesus Christ, gives to all mankind such supernatural helps of His grace as He sees proper for their present state, with a view to their salvation. God by these graces moves men to do good and avoid evil; and if they cooperate with His favors, He will give them new and greater graces. If they continue to correspond He will give them still more; till He brings them at last to the True Faith and Church of Christ, and to a happy end; but if they resist His graces, if they abuse them and act contrary to them, if they reject these calls and offers of mercy bears with them for a time, but at length He stops the continuance of such undeserved favors, and leaves them perish in their ingratitude and obstinacy.

Hence if the greater part of mankind be lost, it is wholly owing to themselves in abusing the goodness of God, and resisting the means He uses for their salvation; so that our salvation is only from the goodness of God, and our perdition wholly from ourselves, according to what He says by His prophet, "Destruction is thine, O Israel; thy help is only in Me." [Hosea 13: 9]

Q. 19. This is, indeed, a full vindication of the Divine goodness; but there are some parts of which need to be explained; and first, how does it appear from Scripture that God gives to all mankind the graces here mentioned with a view to their salvation?

A. This is manifest, from three strong reasons recorded in Scripture:

First, the Scripture assures us that God wills all men to be saved, and that none should be lost. Thus, "As, I live," saith the Lord God, "I will not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." [Ezek. 33: 2] So our Savior declares, "It is not the will of our Father, Who is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish." [Matt. 18: 14] "God dealeth patiently for your sake," says Peter, "not willing that any should, perish, but that all should return to penance." [2 Peter 3: 9] And St. Paul affirms it in express terms: "God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." [1 Tim. 1: 4] He wills, all men to be saved, and He wills them to come to the

knowledge of the truth, as an essential condition of salvation. Now, from this sincere will of God for the salvation of all men, it follows as a necessary consequence that He gives to all men such helps of His grace as are sufficient, if they make good use of them, to bring them both to the knowledge of the truth, and to salvation; for as they are absolutely incapable of taking any step towards this end without His aid, if He wills the end, He must also apply the means in such a manner that if the end be not accomplished it is not owing to Him. If God did not do so, we could not conceive Him affirming that He wills, all men to be saved, and that He wills not the death of the wicked.

Second, the Scripture declares that Jesus Christ died for the redemption of all mankind, without exception. Thus, "Jesus Christ gave Himself a redemption for all." [1 Tim. 2: 6] "If one died for all, then all are dead, and Christ died for all." [2 Cor. 5: 15] "We hope in the living God, Who is the Savior of all men, especially of the faithful."

[1 Tim. 4: 10] "If any man, sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just, and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." [1 John 2: 1] Hence St. John the Baptist said of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world." [John 1: 29] And He Himself says, "The bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world." [John 6: 52] Again, "The Son of Man came to seek and to

save that which was lost;" [Luke 19: 10] and "I come not to judge the world, but to save the world;" [John 12: 47] and St. Paul says of Him, "A faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners." [1 Tim. 1: 15] But as all were lost, as all without exception were sinners, therefore Jesus Christ came to seek and to save all. Now, from this it also follows, as a necessary consequence, that all, without exception, must receive, in some degree or other, such fruits and benefits of His redemption, either directly or indirectly, mediately or immediately, as are sufficient to procure their salvation, if they cooperate with them. If anyone, then, be not actually saved, this cannot be owing to any deficiency on the part of Jesus Christ, but to their own abuse of His graces; for it would be trifling to say that He is the Savior of all, if all did not receive the fruits of His redemption with a view to their salvation.

Third, the Scriptures assure us that all men do actually receive from God, in that degree, manner, and proportion which He sees proper, according to their present state, such helps of His graces as would enable them to secure their salvation, if they cooperated with them. For, in the *first* place, Almighty God, out of His sincere desire for the salvation of all, "sent His Son into the world, that the world might be saved by Him." [John 3: 17] From which St. Paul draws this plain argument: "He that spared not even His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not

also with Him given us all things?" [Rom. 8: 32]; at least all things absolutely necessary for our salvation, and without which it would never be in our power to attain it? Now, as He delivered His Son for all, without exception, and with this very view, "that the world," that is, all mankind, "might be saved by Him:" therefore, to all without exception He gives with Him such helps and graces as, either mediately or immediately, directly or indirectly, put it in their power to be saved. *Secondly*, the Scripture declares that Christ "is the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," [John 1: 9] Consequently every man that cometh into this world partaketh of His light in such degree and proportion as He sees proper to give, and in such time, place, and manner as He thinks fit. For, *thirdly*, "To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ;" [Eph. 4: 7] and "the grace of God our Savior hath appeared to all men." [Tit. 2: 2] *Fourthly*, the goodness and mercy of God to all mankind is thus displayed in Scripture: "Thou hast mercy upon all, because Thou canst do all things, and over lookest the sins of men for the sake of repentance; for Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made: for thou didst not appoint or make anything hating it; . . . but thou sparest all because they are Thine, O Lord, Who lovest souls." [Wis. 11: 24] Now, how could He be said "to spare all," and to "have mercy on all," for the sake of repentance, if He did not give to all such

graces at least as are absolutely necessary to help them and bring them to repentance?

Lastly, Our Savior Himself says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me; and to him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne." [Rev. 3: 20] He knocks at every door, at every heart, by the motions of His holy grace; and if any man whatsoever shall open and cooperate with His grace, so as to overcome, all will be well. From this it is manifest that all men, without exception, in whatever state they may be, at some time or other receive graces from God, as the fruits of the redemption of Jesus, with a view to their eternal salvation, and which, either mediately or immediately, would bring them to that end, if they made a proper use of them; if, therefore, they be not saved, the fault is entirely their own. Graces, indeed, are not given in the same degree and proportion to all, but "according to the measure of the giving of Christ;" for "every one has his proper gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that." [1 Cor. 7: 7] In the distribution of the talents, one received five, another two, and another only one — for God being master of His Own gifts, may give more abundantly to one than to another, as He pleases; but what every one receives is sufficient for his present purpose, and he who received only one talent had it fully in his power to obtain the same reward as the other two, had he improved his talent as they

did; but as he was negligent and unprofitable, he was justly condemned for his sloth.

Cooperate with Graces = More Graces will be Given

Q. 20. How can it be shown that if a man cooperate with those graces which God bestows, he will always revolve more and more from him?

A. This is evident, (1) From the very end which God has in giving them; for all the graces which God bestows on man, through the merits of Christ, are given with a view to his salvation, and from the desire of saving him. If man, therefore, put no obstacle on his part, but improves the present grace, the same gracious desire which God has of his salvation, and which moved Him to give the first, must also move Him to give a second, a third, and so on, till he perfect the great work for which He gives them; and hence, the Scripture says, "Being confident of this very thing, that He who had begun the good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus." [Philip. 1: 6] It is an undoubted truth, then, that God will never fail on His part to give us all further necessary helps, if we make a good use of those He has already given; for He will never abandon us, if we do not first forsake Him. Hence the same holy Apostle exhorts us, "With fear and trembling to work out our own salvation; for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will," [Philip. 2: 12] — showing us that God will not be wanting if we do our part, and work, with

fear and trembling, according to the graces He bestows. Hence, also, the frequent exhortations of the same Apostle "Not to neglect the grace of God;" [1 Tim. 4: 14] "To stir up the grace of God that is in us;" [2 Tim. 1: 6] "Not to receive the grace of God in vain;" [2 Cor. 6: 1] and "to look diligently that no man be wanting to the grace of God." [Heb. 12: 15]

The same truth appears (2) From those testimonies of Scripture where we are assured that if we serve God and obey Him we shall advance in His love and in union with Him; for to serve and obey Him is to make a good use of the graces He gives us: and to be more loved by Him and united to Him is to receive from Him still greater graces. Thus our Savior says, "If any man love Me, he will keep My word" (that is, do My will, correspond with My grace), "and My Father will love him, We will come to him, and will make our abode with him." [John 14: 23] So also St. James says, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Be humbled in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you." [James 4: 8, 10] Hence St. Peter exhorts us "to take heed not to fall from our own steadfastness, but to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ;" [2 Pet. 3: 17] because the continuing steadfast in His service, by corresponding with His grace, is the sure way, to obtain more from Him.

It is proved (3) By the express declaration of Jesus Christ Who says, "I am the vine, and My Father is the husbandman: . . . every branch in Me that beareth fruit He will purge it,

that it may bring forth more fruit." [John 15: 1] Also in the parable of the talents, he ordered the given talent to be taken from the unprofitable servant, and given to the other that had ten talents and then adds, "I say unto you that to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound," [Luke 19: 26]: that is, to every one that hath, and makes a good use of what he hath; for when the master went away he gave one talent to each of his servants, "and said to them, trade till I come." [Ver. 13] And when he came back he found that one had gained ten talents, but the slothful servant none at all, for he had kept the talent he had received laid up in a napkin; so that the only difference between these two was, that one had improved what he had received from his master, and the other had not; and therefore to the one, who had improved his talent, more and more was given; that he might abound. The expression is repeated by Our Savior, on different occasions, but particularly Mark 4: 24, where, considering the great grace bestowed on the Jews, in communicating to them His holy Word, He exhorts them, to be careful to make an ample return to God, by improving that grace, and promises if they do so that more shall be given them: "Take heed," says He to them, "what ye hear: with what measure ye shall mete, it shall be measured to you again; and more shall be given to you;" and then He immediately adds, as a general rule, "for he that hath, to him shall be given." [Ver. 25] In like manner Almighty God says to all sinners whose hearts He touches

with His reproofs, and the check of their conscience, "Turn ye at My reproof; behold I will utter My spirit to you, and I will show, you My words." [Prov. 1: 23] If they cooperate with the grace of His reproof, and turn, He will bestow greater favors upon them.

if a man neglect the graces of God, they shall be taken from him

PART 7

Q. 21. How is it shown that if a man resist or neglect the graces of God, they shall be taken from him? And that if he be lost the fault is his own?

A. This also is manifest throughout the whole Scripture; but that this point may be fully understood, we must consider the different fatal consequences that flow from an obstinate abuse of these graces.

(1.) These graces are withdrawn from them; not, indeed, at once, for God, of His infinite mercy, waits patiently for sinners, and repeats His endeavors for their conversion; but if they still resist or abuse his graces, they are diminished, and given seldomer. Thus our Savior says of the unprofitable servant, "Take the talent away from him; . . . for from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him." [Luke 19: 24, 26] How so? *If he hath not, how can*

anything at all be taken from him? The sense is, he that hath not improved what he hath, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him. The same is repeated on several other occasions.

(2.) The more the graces of God are weakened or withdrawn from sinners by their repeated abuse of them, the more their passions are strengthened in their hearts, acquiring the greater mastery over them, till at last they become their miserable slaves; "My people heard not my voice," says Almighty God; "Israel hearkened, not to Me: so I let them go according to the desires of their heart; they shall walk in their own inventions." [Ps. 80: 12] And St. Paul assures us that whereas the wise men among the heathen nations, by the light of reason itself, came to a clear knowledge of the existence of God, and of His power and Divinity, but, "because when they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God," by a correspondence with the light He gave them, but continued in their idolatry, therefore "God gave them up to the desires of their hearts. . . . God delivered them up to shameful affections, . . . and delivered them up to a reprobate sense." [Rom. 1: 21]

(3.) If their obstinacy still increase, and they go on shutting their eyes against the light of truth which God offers them, He then permits them to be seduced by falsehood, to "give heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils." [1 Tim. 4: 1] Thus, "because they received not the

love of truth that they might be saved, therefore God shall send them the operation of error, to believe lying, that all may be judged." [or, as the Protestant translation has it, that all may be damned] "who have not believed the truth, but have consented to iniquity." [2 Thess. 2: 10] This strong text clearly shows two great truths; *first*, That God offers the truth to all; and, *secondly*, That the source of their damnation is entirely from themselves, in refusing to receive it.

(4.) If, therefore, they still continue, in their perversity, and die in their sins, a dreadful condemnation shall be their portion forever; to them "God swears in His wrath that they shall not enter into His rest." [Ps. 94: 2] On them He pronounces that dreadful sentence, "Because I called and ye refused, I stretched out My hand and there was none that regarded; ye have despised all My counsel, and have neglected My reprehensions; I also will laugh at your destruction, and will mock when that which ye feared shall fall upon you. When sudden calamity shall fall upon you, and destruction, like a tempest, shall be at hand; when tribulation and distress shall come upon you; then shall they, call upon Me, and I will not hear, they shall rise in the morning, and they shall not find Me: because they have hated instruction, and received not the fear of the Lord, nor consented to My counsel, but despised all My reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and shall be filled with their own devices." [Prov. 1: 24] Their

condemnation is prefigured in that of Jerusalem, which had been rebellious to all the calls of God, and over the fate of which our Savior laments in these affecting words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered together thy children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not! Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate." [Matt. 23: 37] "I would, and thou wouldst not!" This is their great crime. I sent you My prophets and servants, My graces, and lights, and holy motions, but these ye killed and destroyed, and gave no ear to them! The miserable fate of all such unhappy sinners, prefigured in Jerusalem, drew tears from the eyes of Jesus, when He wept over that city, and said, "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies . . . shall beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone." [Luke 19: 42] These are they who, having been invited to the marriage-supper of the great King, rejected his invitation, and killed his servants; for which reason "he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city," [Matt. 22: 7], declaring that "not one of them should taste of his supper".

Q. 22. What is the result of all these truths?

A. The result is very plain — namely, Though God Almighty has been pleased to ordain that none shall be saved who have not the True Faith of Jesus Christ, and are not in communion with His Holy Church, yet this is no way inconsistent with the infinite goodness of God, because He gives to all sufficient graces, by which they may, if they correspond with them, be brought to the True faith and Church of Christ; and that, if any are lost, it is not owing to any want of goodness in God, but to their own abuse of the graces bestowed upon them. On some, indeed, He bestows these graces more abundantly, giving them five talents — to others He gave more sparingly, to some two, and to some only one; but He gives to all sufficient for their present wants, and will give more if those be improved, till at last He brings them to the knowledge of His truth and to salvation.

wilds of Tartary or America; Eunuch of Candace and Cornelius

Q. 23. But suppose a person in the wilds of Tartary or America, where the name of Christ has never been heard: suppose also, that this person should attend to the dictates of conscience, enlightened by such graces as God is pleased to give him, and constantly comply with them; — yet, how is it possible that he could be brought to the knowledge and Faith of Jesus Christ?

A. This case is certainly possible; and if it should happen it is not to be doubted but God Almighty would, from the treasures of His infinite wisdom, provide some means to

bring such a person to the knowledge of the truth, even though he should send an Angel from Heaven to instruct him. "The hand of the Lord is not shortened, that He cannot save," in whatever difficulties a poor soul may be; He has, in former times, done wonderful things in cases of this kind, and He is no less able to do the same again: and since He has so clearly ordained, that out of the True Church, and without True Faith in Christ, there is no salvation, there can be no doubt but that, in the case proposed, He would take care effectually to bring such a person to that happiness.

Q. 24. Is there any authority from Scripture to prove this?

A. There can be no stronger proof from Scripture than some facts there related. We have in Scripture two beautiful examples of God's acting in this manner in similar cases, which shows that He would do the same again, if any case should require it. The one is that of the eunuch of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia: he, following the lights that God gave him, though living at a great distance from Jerusalem became acquainted with the worship of the true God, and was accustomed to go from time to time to Jerusalem to adore Him. When, however, the gospel began to be published, the Jewish religion could no longer save him; but being well disposed, by fidelity to the graces he had hitherto received, he was not forsaken by Almighty God; for when he was returning to his own country from Jerusalem, the Lord

sent a message by an Angel to St. Philip to meet and instruct him in the Faith of Christ, and Baptize him. [Acts 8: 26]

The other example is that of Cornelius, who was an officer of the Roman army of the Italic band, and brought up in idolatry. In the course of events, his regiment coming to Judea, he saw there a religion different from his own, — the worship of one only God. Grace moving his heart, he believed in this God, and following the further motions of Divine grace, he gave much alms to the poor, and prayed earnestly to this God to direct him what to do. Did God abandon him? By no means; He sent an Angel from Heaven to tell him to whom to apply in order to be fully instructed in the knowledge and Faith of Jesus Christ, and to be received into His Church by Baptism. Now, what God did in these two cases He is no less able to do in all others, and has a thousand ways in His wisdom to conduct souls who are truly in earnest to the knowledge of the truth, and to salvation. And though such a soul were, in the remotest wilds of the world, God could send a Philip, or an Angel from Heaven, to instruct him, or by the superabundance of his internal grace, or by numberless other ways unknown to us, could infuse into his soul the knowledge of the truth. The great affair is, that we carefully do our part in complying with what He gives us; for of this we are certain, that if we be not wanting to him, he will never be wanting to us, but as he begins the

good work in us, will also perfect it, if we be careful to correspond and to put not hindrance to His designs.

Q. 25. Are none brought to the Faith and Church of Christ but those who correspond as they ought with the graces received before?

A. God forbid; for, though it be certain that God will never fail to bring all those to the Faith and Church of Christ who faithfully correspond with the graces He bestows upon them, yet He has nowhere bound Himself to bestow that singular mercy on no other. Were this the case, how few indeed would receive it! But God, to show the infinite riches of His goodness and mercy, bestows it on many of the most undeserving; he bestowed it even upon many of the hardened Jews who crucified Jesus Christ, and of the priests who persecuted Him to death, even though they had obstinately opposed all the means He had previously used by His doctrine and miracles to convert them. In this He acts as Lord and Master, and as a free disposer of His own gifts; He gives to all the helps necessary and sufficient for their present state; to those who cooperate with these helps He never fails to give more abundantly; and in order to show the riches of His mercy, on numbers of the most undeserving He bestows His most singular favors for their conversion. Hence none have cause to complain; all ought to be solicitous to cooperate with what they have; none ought to despair on account of their past ingratitude, but be assured

that God, Who is rich in mercy, will yet have mercy on them, if they return to Him. Those only ought to fear and tremble who remain obstinate in their evil ways, who continue to resist the calls of His mercy, and put off their conversion from day to day. For, though His infinite mercy knows no bounds in pardoning sins, however numerous and grievous, if we repent, yet the offers of His mercy are limited, and if we exceed these limits by our obstinacy, there will be no more mercy for us. The time of mercy is fixed for every one, and if we fail to embrace its offers within that time the gates of mercy will be closed against us. When the bridegroom has once entered into the marriage-chamber the doors are shut, and the foolish virgins who were unprepared are for ever excluded, with this dreadful reproach from Jesus Christ, — I know ye not; depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity. Seeing, therefore, that no man knows how long the time of mercy will last for him, he ought not to delay a moment; if he neglect the present offer, it may be the last. That hour will come like a thief in the night, when we least expect it, as Christ Himself assures us, and therefore He commands us to be always ready.

PART 8

last moment conversion, rare occurrence

Q. 26. What opinion, then, may be formed of the salvation of anyone, in particular, who is out of the True Church of Christ, and lives in a false religion?

A. In answer to this, I may ask another question: What opinion would you form of the salvation of one who is living in the open state of mortal sin, such as adultery, robbery, impurity, or the like? No one could presume to say that that man will certainly be lost; but every one may say that, if he die in that state, without repentance, he cannot be saved. If it be the will of God positively to save him, He will, before he die, give him the grace of sincere repentance; because God Almighty expressly requires from sinners a sincere repentance as a condition without which they cannot be saved: "Except ye repent," says He, "ye shall all likewise perish." [Luke 13: 3] The same is to be said of a person who is out of the True Church, and lives in a false religion. If he die in that state he cannot be saved; and if it be the will of God actually to save him, he will undoubtedly bring him to the True Faith, and make him a member of the Church of Christ before he leaves this world; and the reason is the same as in the other case. God, as we have seen above, requires all men to be united to the Church by True Faith as a condition of salvation, and therefore daily "adds to the Church such as shall be saved". [Acts 2: 47] Now, though a man be ever so great an adversary to the Church of Christ at present, or ever so great a sinner though a member of the Church, yet, as no man can know what God may be pleased to do for either before he die, so no man can pronounce and say that either the one, or the other will be lost; for, if God pleases, He may give the light of True Faith to the one, and

the grace of true repentance to the other, even at their last moments, and save them.

Q. 27. But suppose a person live in a false religion, and die without being reunited to the Communion of the Church of Christ, can it be said of such a one that he is certainly lost?

A. I must here put another question. Suppose a great sinner continues to live in his sins, and dies without any appearance of repentance, could you say of such a one that he is certainly lost? Certainly not; because no man knows, or can know, what may have passed between God and his soul in his last moments; all that can be said is, that if he has actually died without repentance, he certainly is lost; but if God, of His infinite goodness, has given him the grace of a perfect repentance, and he has corresponded on his part with so great a favor, he will be saved. In like manner, suppose a person living in false religion dies without giving any sign of embracing the True Faith, or without being reconciled to the Church of Christ, we can never say of such a one with certainty that he is lost; all that we can say must be under the same condition as in the other case: if he has actually died as he lived, separated from the True Church of Christ, and without the True Faith of Christ, he cannot be saved. But if God, of His great mercy, has given him in his last moments light and grace to see and embrace the True Faith, and he has corresponded with so great a favor as God

requires, he will be saved. Now, as no man knows, or can know, what may have passed in the soul of either the one or the other at their last moments, so no man can pronounce of either that he is lost with certainty.

Q. 28. But, in the case proposed, if a person, in his last moments shall receive the light of Faith from God, and embrace it with all his heart, would this suffice to make him a member of the True Church in the sight of God?

A. Most and undoubtedly; the case is the same in this as in that of Baptism. Though Jesus Christ expressly says, "Except a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," [John 3: 5] which establishes the absolute necessity of Baptism for salvation, yet, suppose a heathen should be instructed in the Faith of Christ, and embrace it with all his heart, but die suddenly without Baptism, or be taken away by infidel friends, or put in absolute impossibility of receiving Baptism, and die in the above dispositions with sincere repentance and a desire of Baptism, this person will undoubtedly receive all the fruits of Baptism from God, and therefore is said to be Baptized in desire. In like manner, suppose a person brought up in a false religion embraces with all his heart the light of True Faith, which God gives him in his last moments — as it is absolutely impossible for him in that state "to join the external Communion of the Church in the eyes of men, "yet he certainly will be considered united to her in the sight of

God, by means of the True Faith which he embraces, and his desire of being united to the Church, were it in his power.

Q. 29. Is there any reason to believe that God Almighty often bestows the light of Faith, or the grace of repentance, at the hour of death, upon those who have lived all their lives in heresy, or in sin?

A. That God can in an instant convert the most obdurate heart, either to the True Faith, or to repentance, is manifest from the examples of St. Paul, Zacheus the publican, St. Matthew the Apostle, and many others; and, in particular of St. Peter, to whom in an instant He revealed the Divinity of Jesus Christ, Who said to Him on that account, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, but My Father Who is in Heaven." [Matt. 16: 17] That He can do this at the hour of death, as easily as at any time in life, cannot be doubted, as we see in the good thief upon the Cross: He is the same all-powerful God at all times. But it must be owned that there is very little reason to think that this is frequently the case. There certainly are not the smallest grounds from revelation to think so. Nay, the Scripture, as we have seen above, threatens the contrary. All that can be said is, that as God is able, He can do it; and as He is merciful, He may, do it; and the possibility of this is sufficient to hinder us from passing judgment upon the state of any soul who has left this world: but it would certainly be

the height of madness, and a manifest tempting of God, for a person to go on in an evil way in hopes of finding such mercy at the last.

pious in their own way

Q. 30. Do we not see, even among false religions, many serious, well-disposed people, who live good lives, and are even devout and pious in their own way; is it not hard to think that such persons will not be saved?

A. But is it not much more reasonable in itself, as well as more conformable to the whole tenor of what God has revealed, to say, that if they be truly such before God as they appear in the eyes of men, and such as He knows will continue to correspond with the graces He gives them, He will not allow them to die in their false religion, but will undoubtedly bring them to the True Faith before they die? The door of salvation is by no means closed against such people by anything here advanced; the only difficulty is, about the way they can arrive at it. By supposing they can reach it, though they die in their false religion, is supposing God to act contrary to Himself and in opposition to everything He has revealed to men upon this matter; but by adhering to His Holy Word, and firmly believing that God "adds daily to the Church such as shall be saved," and will most undoubtedly add those here spoken of to her, if they be of that happy number, we do not make their salvation more difficult either to themselves or to God; and we avoid

the dreadful consequence of supposing God to act contrary to Himself and to His own revealed will. If these people be really such in the eyes of God as they appear to men; and if Jesus Christ, foreseeing their perseverance in improving the graces He bestows upon them, acknowledges them among the number of His sheep, "to whom He gives eternal life," — then it is evident they are in the state of those of whom He says in the gospel, "Other sheep I have who are not of this fold," [John 10: 16] both the one and the other are considered as belonging to Him, according to His foreknowledge of their salvation; but neither of them are joined in the visible Communion of His Church. Now of these last He immediately adds, "Them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." It was not enough for their salvation to be acknowledged to be His sheep; but because they were so, it was necessary that they should be united to the fold to which they did not then belong. The same then must be the case of those we here speak of: they are sheep of Jesus Christ, because He foresees they will at last be saved; but as they are not at present within the fold of His Church, in order to secure their salvation, "them also He must bring," before they die, that there may be "one fold and one shepherd."

Q. 31. This is very strong indeed. But as this is a case on which many pretend to lay a great stress, whence arises the

weight it seems to have with them in favor of those who even die in a false religion?

A. Their mistake arises from the idea which they form to themselves of good works, and from their not observing the vast difference there is between natural good moral actions, and supernatural Christian good works, which alone will bring a man to Heaven. However corrupted our nature is by sin, yet there are few or none of the seed of Adam who have not certain good natural dispositions, some being more inclined to one virtue, some to another. Thus some are of a humane, benevolent disposition; some tenderhearted and compassionate towards others in distress; some just and upright in their dealings; some temperate and sober; some mild and patient; some also have natural feelings of devotion, and of reverence for the Supreme Being.

Now, all such good natural dispositions of themselves are far from being Christian virtues, and are altogether incapable of bringing a man to Heaven. They indeed make him who has them agreeable to men, and procure him esteem and regard from those with whom he lives; but they are of no avail before God with regard to eternity. To be convinced of this we need only observe, that good natural dispositions of this kind are found in Mahometans, Jews, and heathens, as well as among Christians; yet no Christian can suppose that a Mahometan, Jew, or heathen, who dies in

that state, will obtain the kingdom of Heaven by means of these virtues.

The Pharisees, among the people of God, were remarkable for many such virtues; they had a great veneration for the law of God; they made open profession of piety and devotion; gave large alms to the poor; fasted and prayed much; were assiduous in all the public observances of religion; were remarkable for their strict observance of the Sabbath, and had an abhorrence of all profanation of the holy name of God; yet Jesus Christ Himself expressly declares, "Except your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." [Mat. 5: 20] We are told that one of their number went up to the temple to pray, who was in the eyes of the world a very good man, led an innocent life, free from those grosser crimes which are so common among men, fasted twice a week, and gave tithes of all he possessed; yet Christ Himself assures us that he was condemned in the sight of God.

All this proves that none of the above good dispositions of nature are capable in themselves of bringing any man to Heaven. And the reason is, because "there is no other name given to men under Heaven by which we can be saved, but the name of Jesus only," [Acts 4: 12]; therefore no good works whatsoever, performed through good dispositions of nature only, can ever be crowned by God with eternal

happiness. To obtain this glorious reward our good works must be sanctified by the blood of Jesus, and become Christian virtues. Now, if we search the Holy Scriptures, we find two conditions absolutely required to make our good works agreeable to God, and conducive to our salvation.

First, that we be united to Jesus Christ by True Faith, which is the root and foundation of all Christian virtues; for St. Paul expressly says, "Without Faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb.11: 6) Observe the word *impossible*; He does not say it is difficult, but that it is *impossible*. Let, therefore, a man have ever so many good natural dispositions, and be as charitable, devout, and mortified as the Pharisees were, yet if he have not True Faith in Jesus Christ, he cannot, enter into the kingdom of Heaven. They refused to believe in Him, and therefore all their works were good for nothing as to their salvation; and unless our righteousness exceed theirs in this point, as Christ Himself assures us, we shall never enter into His heavenly kingdom. But even True Faith itself, however necessary, is not sufficient alone to make our good works available to salvation; for it is necessary.

Second, we must be in charity with God, in His friendship and grace, without which even True Faith itself will never save us. To be convinced of this, let us only give ear to St. Paul, who says, "Though I should have all Faith, so as to remove mountains, though I should distribute all my goods

to feed the poor, though I should give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

[1 Cor. 13: 2]

So that let a man be ever so peaceable, regular, inoffensive and religious in his way, charitable to the poor, and what else you please, yet if he have not the True Faith of Jesus Christ, and be not in charity with God, all his apparent virtues go for nothing; it is impossible for him to please God by them; and if he live and die in that state they will profit him nothing. Hence it is manifest that those who die in a false religion, however unexceptionable may be their moral conduct in the eyes of men, yet, as they have not the True Faith of Christ, and are not in charity with Him, they are not in the way of salvation; for nothing can avail us in Christ but "Faith that works by charity." [Gal. 5: 6]

PART 9

excuses in favor of non-Catholics

Q. 32. But as all this is so evident (regarding the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation), how comes it that some nowadays, who profess themselves members of the Church of Christ, seem to call this truth in question by continually pleading in favor of those who are not of their Communion, proposing excuses for them, and using all their endeavors to prove a possibility of salvation for those who live and die in a false religion?

A. This is one of those devices which the enemy of souls makes use of in these unhappy times to promote his own cause, and which there are grounds to fear has, from various reasons, found its way even among those who belong to the fold of Christ; for,

(1.) As they live among those who are of false religions, and often have the most intimate connections with them, they naturally and most laudably contract a love and affection for them. This makes them at first unwilling to think their friends should be out of the way of salvation. Then they proceed to wish and hope they may not be so. Hence they come to call in question their being so; and from this the step is easy to grasp at every pretext to persuade themselves they are not so.

(2.) Latitudinarian principles are to be found everywhere in these our days; an uncovenanted mercy, forsooth, is found to be in God for Mahometans, Jews, and infidels, which had never been heard of among Christians. This is gilded over with the specious character of a liberal way of thinking and generous sentiments; and it is become the fashion to think and speak in this manner. Now fashion is a most powerful persuasive, against which even good people are not always proof (immune); and when one hears those sentiments every day resounding in his ears, and anything that seems contrary to them ridiculed and condemned, he naturally yields to the delusion, and turns away his mind from so

much as wishing to examine the strength of these sentiments from fear of finding out their falsehood. When, from fear of being despised, we wish anything to be true, the translation is very easy to believe it to be true, and without further examination every sophistical show of reason in its favor is adopted as conclusive.

(3.) Worldly interest also very often concurs with its overbearing influence to produce the same end. A member of the Church of Christ sees his separated friend in power and credit in the world, and capable of being of great service to him, and knows, should he embrace the True Faith, he would lose all his influence, and become unable to serve him. This makes him cool in wishing his conversion; but the thought that his friend is not in the way of salvation pains him; he therefore begins to wish he could be saved as he is in his own religion. Hence he comes to hope but that he may, and gladly adopts any show of proof to make him think that he will. It is true, indeed, all these reasons would have little influence with a sincere member of the Church of Christ, who understands, his religion, and has a just sense of what it teaches him on this head. But the great misfortune of many who adopt these loose ways of thinking and speaking is,

(4.) That they are ignorant of the grounds of their religion; they do not examine the matter thoroughly, and if once they be infected by the spirit of the day, they are unwilling to

examine; they even take it amiss if any zealous friend should attempt to undeceive them, and grasping at those miserable sophisms which are alleged in favor of their loose way of thinking, refuse to open their eyes to the truth, or even to look at the reasons which support it.

sophistical arguments re: invincible ignorance

Q. 33. What are those sophistical arguments by which they are so much deceived?

A. We have seen them above, and fully confuted them one by one. But their great mistake arises from their erroneous ideas of invincible ignorance and the conditions required to be a member of the Church of Christ. For as they must either deny their own Faith, or allow this general proposition, that "without Faith it is impossible to please God," whilst they admit the truth of this, they pretend that, as invincible ignorance will excuse a man before God in all other cases; so it must excuse him in this also and therefore, that though a man have not the True Faith, "invincible ignorance will save him" — not adverting to the two senses which these words contain, one of which is certainly true, and the other no less certainly false. Invincible ignorance will indeed save him from the guilt of having a false faith, and of not having the True Faith: this is certainly true. But to say that invincible ignorance will save him — that is, will bring him to salvation — is certainly false, as all we have seen above fully proves.

Again, whilst they admit this other general proposition, that "out of the True Church of Christ there is no salvation," which they must acknowledge, or give up their own religion, they suppose that a man may be a member of the True Church in the sight of God though not joined with her in Communion, as all Baptized children are, though born in heresy, at least till they come to the age of judging for themselves. Their mistake lies in not reflecting that all adults in a false religion can be members of the Church in the sight of God in no other sense than those were of whom our Savior says, "Other sheep I have who are not of this fold." But as He expressly declared that it was necessary to bring even those to the Communion of His Church, this evidently shows that they and all such are not members of the Church in such a way that they can be saved in their present state without being joined in her Communion.

Q. 34. But is it not laudable and praiseworthy to show all indulgence and condescension to those who are without and to behave towards them with all lenity and mildness?

A. Most undoubtedly: it is not only laudable, but a strict duty, as far as truth can go. But to betray the truth with any such view must be grievous crime, and highly prejudicial to both parties. Experience, in fact, shows that the loose way of thinking and speaking, which some members of the True Church have of *late* adopted, is productive of the worst

consequences, both to themselves and to those whom they desire to favor.

(1.) Those who are separated from the Church of Christ well know that she constantly professes, as an article of her Creed, that without the True Faith, and out of her Communion, there is no salvation. When, therefore, they see the members of that Church talking doubtfully on this point, seeming to question the truth of the doctrine, and even alleging pretexts and excuses to explain it away, what can they think? What effect must this have upon their minds? Must it not tend to extinguish any desire of inquiring after the truth which God may have given them, and to shut their hearts against any such good thought? Self-love never fails eagerly to lay hold of everything that favors its wishes; and if once they find this truth called in question, even by those who profess to believe it, they will consider it as a mere school dispute, and think no more about the matter.

(2.) This way of thinking and speaking naturally tends to extinguish all zeal for the salvation of souls in the hearts of those who adopt it; for whilst they persuade themselves that there is a possibility of salvation for those who die in a false faith and out of the Church of Christ, self-love will easily incline them not to give themselves any trouble about their conversion; nay, it has sometimes even gone so far as to make some think it more advisable not to endeavor to undeceive them, lest it should change their present

excusable ignorance, as they call it, into a *culpable obstinacy*, not reflecting that, by their pious and zealous endeavors, they may be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and save their souls, whereas, through their uncharitable neglect, they may be deprived of so great a happiness. Woe to the world, indeed, if the first preachers of Christianity had been of such unchristian sentiments!

Ready for Worldly Motives to Expose Faith to Danger

(3.) It is no less prejudicial to the members of the Church themselves to embrace such ways of thinking; for it cannot fail to cool their zeal and esteem for religion, to make them, more careless of preserving their Faith, ready for worldly motives to expose it to danger, and in time of temptation to forsake it entirely. In fact, if a man be thoroughly persuaded of the truth of his holy religion, and of the necessity of being a member of the Church of Christ, how is it possible he should ever expose himself to any occasion of losing so great a treasure, or for any worldly fear or favor to abandon it? Since experience shows then that many, for some trifling worldly advantage, do expose themselves to such danger, by going to places where they cannot practice their religion, but find every inducement to leave it, or, by engaging in employments inconsistent with their duty, expose their children to the same dangerous occasions, this can arise only from want of a just idea of the importance of their religion; and, upon a strict examination, it is always found

that some degree or other of the above latitudinarian sentiments is the radical cause.

(4.) Besides, if a person once begin to hesitate about the importance of his religion, what esteem or regard can he have for the laws, rules, or practices of it? Self-love, always attentive to its own satisfaction will soon tell him that, if it be not absolutely necessary to be of that religion, much less necessary must it be to submit to all its regulations; hence liberties are taken in practice, the commands of the Church are despised, the exercises of devotion neglected, and a shadow of religion introduced under the show of liberal sentiments, to the destruction of all solid virtue and piety.

Q. 35. What shall we say of those members of the Church of Christ who actually abandon their religion, and renounce their Faith?

A. As God Himself has given a full and distinct answer to this question in three different places of His Holy Scriptures, it would be presumption to answer it in any other words than His Own.

First, He says, by the mouth of His holy Apostle St. Paul, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have, moreover, tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and are fallen away, to be renewed again into penance, crucifying again to

themselves the Son of God, and making a mockery of Him. For the earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is tilled, receiveth blessing from God: but that which bringeth forth thorns and briers is rejected, and very near to a curse, whose end is to be burnt." [Heb. 6: 4] On which passage the late learned and pious publisher of the *Rheims New Testament* says, in the note, "that it is impossible for such as have fallen after Baptism to be again Baptized; and very hard for such as have apostatized from the Faith, after having received many graces, to return again to the happy state from which they fell."

Again, "If we sin willfully," says the same holy Apostle, "after having received the knowledge of the truth, there is left no sacrifice for sins, but a certain dreadful expectation of judgment, and the rage of a fire which shall consume the adversaries," [Heb. 10: 26]: on which the same learned author says, — "He speaks of the sin of willful apostasy from the known truth; after which, as we cannot be Baptized again, we cannot expect to have that abundant remission of sins, which Christ purchased by His death, applied to our souls in that ample manner as it is in Baptism; but we have rather all manner of reason to look for a dreadful judgment; the more because apostates from the known truth seldom or never have the grace to return to it."

Lastly, By the mouth of the holy Apostle St. Peter, God thus declares the state of such people: "For, if fleeing from the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they be again entangled in them, and overcome, their latter state is become to them worse than the former. For it had been better for them never to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back from that Holy Commandment which was delivered to them. For that of the true proverb hath happened to them. The dog is returned to his own vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."
[2 Pet. 2: 20]

Q. 36. You said above that it is *only of late* that this loose way of thinking necessity of true faith, and of being in Communion which the Church of Christ, which we have been examining, has appeared among the members of the Church: was not the same language held by Christians in all former ages?

invincible ignorance is deceptive evasion

A. Far from it; and this is one of the greatest grounds of its condemnation. It is a novelty, it is a new doctrine; it was unheard of from the beginning; nay, it is directly opposite to the uniform doctrine of all the great lights of the Church in all former ages. These great and holy men, the most unexceptionable witnesses of the Christian Faith in their days, knew no other language on this subject but what they

saw spoken before them by Christ and His Apostles; they knew their Divine Master had declared, "He that believeth not shall be condemned;" they heard His Apostle proclaiming a dreadful anathema against any one, though an Angel from Heaven, who should dare to alter the gospel he had preached, [Gal. 1: 8]; they heard him affirming in express terms, that "without Faith it is impossible to please God"; and they constantly held the same language. And as they saw not the smallest ground in Scripture for thinking that those who were out of the Church could be saved by invincible ignorance, that deceptive evasion is not so much as once to be met with in all their writings.

PART 10

Q. 37. In what manner, then, do these holy Saints express themselves on this subject?

A. It would be endless to collect all their testimonies; the few that follow may suffice as a sample of the whole. St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, and disciple of the Apostles, in his epistle to the Philadelphians, says, "Those who make a separation shall not inherit the kingdom of God." St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, and Martyr in the second age, says, "The Church is the gate of life, but all the others are thieves and robbers, and therefore to be avoided." [*De Haer.*, lib. i. c. 3] St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, and Martyr about the middle of the third age, says, "The house of God is but one, and no one can have salvation but in the Church."

[Epist. 62, *alias* 4] And in his book on the unity of the Church, he says, "He cannot have God for His Father who has not the Church for His Mother. If anyone could escape who was out of the ark of Noah, then he who is out of the Church may also escape." So much for these most primitive fathers.

In the 4th Century, St. Chrysostom speaks thus: "We know that salvation belongs to the Church ALONE, and that no one can partake of Christ, nor be saved, out of the Catholic Church and the Catholic Faith," [Hom. 1. *in Pasch.*]

St. Augustine, in the same age, says, "The Catholic Church alone is the Body of Christ; the Holy Ghost gives life to no one who is out of this Body," [Epist. 185, § 50, *Edit. Bened.*] And in another place, "Salvation no one can have but in the Catholic Church. Out of the Catholic Church he may have anything but salvation. He may have honor, he may have Baptism, he may have the gospel, he may both believe and preach in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; but he can find salvation nowhere but in the Catholic Church," [Serm. *ad Cresaricus de Emerit*] Again: "In the Catholic Church," says he, "there are both good and bad. But those that are separated from her, as long as their opinions are opposite to hers, cannot be good. For though the conversation of some of them appears commendable, yet their very separation from the Church makes them bad, according to that of our Savior, [Luke 11: 23], 'He that is not

with Me is against Me and he that gathers not with Me scattereth'." [Epist. 209, *ad Feliciam*]

Lactantius, another great light of the fourth age, says, "It is the Catholic Church only which retains the true worship. This Church is the fountain of truth, it is the house of Faith, it is the temple of God. If anyone either comes not into this Church, or departs from it, his eternal salvation is desperate. No one must flatter himself obstinately, for his soul and salvation are at stake." [*Divin. Instit.*, lib. iv. c. 30]

St. Fulgentius, in the 6th Century, speaks thus: "Hold most firm and without any doubt that no one who is Baptized out of the Catholic Church can partake of eternal life, if, before the end of this life, he be not restored to the Catholic Church and incorporated therein." [*Lib. de Fid.*, c. 37] These are sufficient to show the Faith of the Christian World in all preceding ages; for all the holy writers of Christianity, in every age, speak on this subject in the same strain.

Q. 38. These testimonies are strong, and speak plainly to the purpose; but after such proofs is it not a matter of surprise that anybody should call this point in question?

A. This, indeed, can be accounted for only by the general spirit of worldliness and disregard of all religion which now so universally prevails; for the first Reformers and some of their followers, seeing the strong proofs from Scripture for this doctrine, and not finding the smallest foundation in

these sacred writings to support the contrary, have fairly acknowledged it, however much it made against themselves. We have seen how the divines at Westminster speak on this matter in the Confession of Faith, used to this day by the Church of Scotland, and which was ratified and adopted by the General Assembly in the year 1647, as the standard of their religion. But their predecessors in the preceding century, when the Presbyterian religion first began in Scotland, speak no less clearly on the same subject; for in their Confession of Faith, authorized by Parliament in the year 1560, "as a doctrine grounded upon the infallible Word of God," they speak thus, Article xvi.: "As we believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so we do most constantly believe, that from the beginning there hath been, and now is, and to the end of the world shall be, one Kirk (Church) — that is to say, one company and multitude of men, chosen by God, who rightly worship and embrace Him by True Faith in Jesus Christ; . . . which Kirk is Catholic — that is, universal; because it containeth the elect of all ages, etc.; out of which Kirk there is neither life nor eternal felicity: and therefore we utterly abhor the blasphemy of them that affirm that men which live according to equity and justice shall be saved, what religion soever they have professed." This confession of the original Kirk of Scotland was reprinted and published in Glasgow in the year 1771, from which this passage is taken. Calvin himself confesses the same truth, in these words, speaking

of the visible Church: "Out of its bosom," says he, "no remission of sins, no salvation is to be hoped for, according to Isaiah, Joel, and Ezekiel; . . . so that it is always highly pernicious to depart from the Church;" and this he affirms in his Institutions themselves.

[B. iv. c. 1, 4]

We shall add one testimony more, which is particularly strong; it is of Dr. Pearson, a bishop of the Church of England, in his exposition of the Creed, edit. 1669, where he says, "The necessity of believing the Catholic Church appeared, first, in this, that Christ hath appointed it as the only way to eternal life. We read at the first, [Acts 2: 47] 'That the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved;' and what was then daily done hath been done since continually. Christ never appointed two ways to Heaven; nor did He build a Church to save some, and make another institution for other men's salvation — [Acts 4: 12], 'There is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus; and that name is no otherwise given under Heaven than in the Church. As none were saved from the deluge but such as were within the ark of Noah, framed for their reception by the command of God; as none of the first-born of Egypt lived but such as were within those habitations whose doorposts were sprinkled with blood, by the appointment of God, for their preservation; as none of the inhabitants of Jericho could

escape the fire or sword but such as were within the house of Rahab, for whose protection a covenant was made; — so NONE shall ever escape the eternal wrath of God who belong not to the Church of God." Behold how far the force of truth prevailed among the most eminent members of the Reformation before latitudinarian principles had crept in among them! What a reproach must this be before the judgment-seat of God to those members of the Church of Christ who call in question or seek to invalidate this great and fundamental truth, the very fence and barrier of the true religion; which is so repeatedly declared by God in His Holy, Scriptures, professed by the Church of Christ in all ages, attested in the strongest terms by the most eminent lights of Christianity, and candidly acknowledged by the most celebrated writers and diviners of the Reformation! Will not every attempt to weaken the importance of this Divine truth be considered by the great God as betraying His cause and the interests of His Holy Faith? And will those who do so be able to plead even their favorite invincible ignorance in their own defense before him?

Q. 39. What are the proper sentiments and dispositions which this great truth ought to produce in the hearts and conduct of those who are members of the Church of Christ?

A. Nothing can contribute more effectually to produce the most necessary and salutary dispositions in their hearts, both towards God, towards one another, and towards those

who are separated from their Communion, than the frequent and serious consideration of their vocation to the Faith of Christ, and to the Communion of that Church out of which there is no salvation.

With regard to God, it cannot fail to inspire them with the most tender sentiments of affection, love, and gratitude towards Him, to see themselves so highly favored by His infinite goodness, without any merit on their part, and in preference to so many thousands of others who are left in ignorance and error. They ought never to cease praising and adoring Him for so great and inestimable a favor, and ought to be assiduous in giving proof of the sincerity of their gratitude and love to Him, by a continual obedience to His Commandments. How agreeable such things are to Almighty God, and how much He requires them from those whom He has so highly favored, is evident from His Own Divine Word, where we are frequently put in mind of the greatness of the grace of our vocation, and pressingly commanded to make a proper return to God for it, by these holy virtues. "Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ," says St. Paul, "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ, as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity: . . . Wherefore I cease not to make commemoration of you in my prayers, that the God of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit and of wisdom, of revelation in the knowledge

of Him; the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us, who believe according to the operation of the might of His power which He wrought in Christ." [Eph. 1: 3]

Behold how ardently he desires that we may have a proper sense of that great mercy! And a little after, describing the greatness of this favor, and the return it requires from us, he says, "By Him (Christ) we have access in one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the Saints and domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ, Himself being the chief cornerstone." [Eph. 2: 18] "For you were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk ye as the children of light; for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice and truth; proving what is well-pleasing to God: and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." [Eph. 5: 8] In another place he says, that ye may walk worthy of God in all things pleasing, . . . giving thanks to God the Father, Who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the Saints in light; Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." [Col. 1: 10] And again, writing to Titus, he says, "It is a faithful saying, and these things I will have thee

affirm constantly, that they who believe in God may be careful to excel in good works." [Tit. 3: 8]

Lastly, to show the absolute necessity of this grateful correspondence on our part with great goodness of God towards us, he assures us that it is only on condition of our persevering in our Holy Faith, and in the hope of our calling, that we can expect the eternal reward of being presented spotless before God: "Whereas," says he, "ye were sometimes alienated, and enemies in mind, in evil works; yet now He hath reconciled you in the Body of His Flesh, to present you holy, and unspotted, and blameless before Him, if so ye continue in the Faith grounded and settled, and immovable from the gospel which ye have heard, which is preached in all the creation which is under Heaven." [Col. 1: 21]

St. Peter also describes the grace of our vocation in the most beautiful terms, and assures us that the very design of God in calling us was that we might make a suitable return to Him by declaring His praises. "Ye are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, that ye may declare the virtues (or praises) of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His admirable light." [1 Pet. 2: 9] How great an obligation does all this lay us under of living good and studying in all things to do the will of God, especially when Christ Himself expressly says, "So let your

light shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father Who is in Heaven!"

PART 11: CONCLUSION

Q. 40. What are the dispositions and behavior which this inestimable goodness of God requires in the members of His Church towards one another?

A. St. Paul describes them to us in a very strong light, as follows: "I, therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation in which ye are called with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity; careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body, one spirit, as ye are called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all." [Eph. 4: 1] See here in what strong colors he shows that humility, meekness, and brotherly love, are virtues essential to our vocation, and that everything belonging to our holy religion requires that we should live in the constant practice of them; that we are all united in one body, the Church of Christ — animated by one spirit, the spirit of Jesus, which guides and conducts that body into all truth; that we are called to one hope of our calling, the possession of God Himself in eternal glory; that we all serve one Lord, Our Lord Jesus Christ; that we all profess one Faith, that Holy Faith which He revealed to mankind, without which it is impossible to please God; that we are all

sanctified by one Baptism, that we all serve one God; that we are all children of one Father, and that this heavenly Father is ever present with us, and our whole conduct is naked and open before Him. How unbecoming, then, must it be in the eyes of this Our Father, to see us entertaining discords or ill-will among ourselves? And how unworthy of our vocation, and dishonorable to our religion, if, being members of the same body, servants of the same master, and children of the same father, united together in so many strong ties of religion, we should live in animosity and enmity with each other?

In another place, the same holy Apostle, describing the dispositions necessary for those whom God has called, as His elect, to the inestimable grace of being members of His Holy Church, says: "Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another: if anyone have a complaint against another, even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do ye also." [Col. 3: 12]

And the contrary behavior is so unbecoming and so unworthy of our vocation, that St. James declares it to be even diabolical. "If ye have bitter zeal and contentions in your heart, glory not, and be not liars against the truth; for this is not wisdom descending from above, but earthly, sensual, devilish." [James 3: 14] All this is drawn from the

express doctrine of our great Master Himself, Who not only commands all His followers to live in brotherly love and union among themselves, but declares this to be so connected with their vocation, that it is the distinguishing sign of their belonging to him: "By this shall all men know," says He, "that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." [John 13: 35]

Q. 41. What are the dispositions which the members of the Church of Christ ought to have, and what line of conduct should they follow towards those who are separated from their Communion?

A. It is impossible to have a real and sincere love of God, without also loving everything that is connected with Him; and the more nearly anything is connected with God, the greater must our love be towards it. Now, all those who are in a false religion, though separated from the Communion of the Church, yet have in many other respects a very near connection with God, for they are His creatures, the work of His hands, made for His glory; they are His images, made after the likeness and similitude of God; they are redeemed by the Blood of Jesus, Who died for mankind; they are created to be eternally happy with Him in Heaven for God wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live. All these considerations show that we are bound to have a sincere and fervent love for them, and a charitable zeal for their eternal salvation, and consequently to have

the most tender sympathy and compassion for them, considering the danger in which their souls are; and this is the radical and essential disposition of our hearts, which we are bound to have towards all mankind, without exception. Of this we have a beautiful example in St. Paul, who thus expresses the dispositions of his heart towards his brethren, the unbelieving Jews: "I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great sadness and sorrow in my heart: for I wished myself to be anathema" (that is, a curse) "from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh." [Rom. 9: 1]

Now, this sincere love and zeal for their salvation ought to show itself principally in these following points:

(1.) "To be always ready to satisfy everyone that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us." [1 Pet. 3: 15] — that is, to be always willing and ready to explain our Holy Faith to them and to show them the grounds upon which our Faith is built, whenever any of them ask us to do so. This should be done with all modesty and mildness towards them, not entering into idle disputes, nor keeping up contentions with heat and acrimony, even though they should be ever so unreasonable in what they say against us, but giving an account of the hope that is in us with mildness and charity, and leaving the test to the dispositions of Divine Providence; for the Scripture says, "Avoid foolish questions, knowing that

they beget strifes; but the servant of the Lord must not wrangle, but be mild towards all men, apt to teach, patient, with modesty admonishing them that resist the truth, if peradventure God may give them repentance to know the truth, and they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are held captive at will," [2 Tim. 2: 23]; and "to walk with wisdom towards them that are without; so that your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." [Col. 4: 5]

(2.) To be earnest in praying to God for their conversion and salvation, is as expressly commanded in Scripture: "I desire, therefore, first of all, that supplications; prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings, be made for all men, . . . for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." [1 Tim. 2: 1] We have a beautiful example of this in the same holy Apostle, who, full of charity for the salvation of the Jews, pities their mistaken zeal for their own errors, and pours forth the prayers of his heart for them: "Brethren," says he, "the will of my heart, indeed, and my prayer to God, is for them unto salvation; for I bear them witness that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." [Rom. 10: 1]

(3.) To give them good example, by the exercise of good works, and the practice of all Christian virtues. Nothing is of

greater efficacy to give others a favorable opinion of our holy religion than a good life. This is a living argument which teaches the most ignorant and convinces the most obstinate. And hence we find this repeatedly commanded in the Scriptures on purpose to give edification to those who are without, and to excite them to glorify God. "So let your light shine," says Jesus Christ Himself, "before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your heavenly Father." [Matt. 5: 16] And St. Peter expresses himself thus, on this important duty: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against your soul, having your conversation good among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, considering you by your good works, they may give glory to God in the day of visitation; . . . for so is the will of God, that by doing well ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." [1 Pet. 2: 11, 15] St. Paul also requires the same thing, saying, "In all things show thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity; thy speech sound that cannot be blamed, that he who is on the contrary part may be afraid, having no evil to say of us." [Tit. 2: 7]

But (4.) Lastly, if not withstanding such pious and edifying behavior, persecutions and trials should be permitted by the Divine Providence to come upon us for His Own wise and just purpose, if we should be evil spoken of falsely, if the truths of our holy religion should be calumniated, and our doctrine

misrepresented, we must not be surprised nor disheartened; but remember that this is the way the world treated Our Lord and Master Himself, Who foretold that His faithful followers should be treated in the same manner. St. Peter also assures us that this is one of the signs of those who follow sects of perdition, to speak evil of the truth, "through whom," says he, "the way of truth shall be evil spoken of," [2 Pet. 2: 2]; and St. Jude adds, "that they blaspheme whatever things they know not." [Jude 10] Neither ought such trials to diminish, even in the smallest degree, our sincere charity for them, and our desire of their salvation; but rather increase our pity and compassion for their poor souls, and make us more earnest in praying for them, imitating our blessed Savior Who, on the Cross itself, prayed for His persecutors: "Father," said He, "forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." Above all things, we must never entertain the least thought of revenge, "not rendering evil for evil, not railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing; for unto this ye are called, that may inherit a blessing." [1 Pet. 3: 9] On the contrary, looking on our trials as all disposed and ordered by the hand of God, "Without Whom not a hair of our head can fall to the ground," we must "rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer ignominy for the sake of Christ." [Acts 5: 41] For "if also ye suffer anything for justice' sake, blessed are ye; . . . for it is better doing well (if such be the will of God) to suffer, than doing ill." [1 Pet. 3: 14, 17] And therefore, "Dearly beloved, think not strange the burning heat that is to try

you, as if some new thing happened to you; but if ye partake of the sufferings of Christ rejoice that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may also be glad With exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, ye shall be happy; for that which is of the honor, glory, and power of God and that which is His spirit, resteth upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, or a coveter of other men's things; but if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name," [1 Pet. 4: 12] — always remembering the words of Our Lord: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all that is evil against you falsely, for My sake: be glad, and rejoice, for your reward is great in Heaven." [Matt. 5: 2]